SOUTHEY'S
LIFE OF NELSON



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(Abridged and adapted)

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Lord Nelson—*Frontispiece.*

THE LIFE OF NELSON

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HORATIO, son of Edmund and Catherine Nelson, was born September 29th, 1758, in the parsonage-house of Burnham-Thorpe, a village in the county of Norfolk, of which his father was rector. The maiden name of his mother was Suckling: her grandmother was an elder sister of Sir Robert Walpole, and this child was named after his godfather, the first Lord Walpole. Mrs. Nelson died in 1767, leaving eight out of eleven children. Her brother, Captain Maurice Suckling, of the navy, visited the widower upon this event, and promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years afterwards, when Horatio was only twelve years of age, being at home during the Christmas holidays, he read in the county newspaper that his uncle was appointed to the *Raisonnable*, of 64 guns. "Do, William," said he to a brother who was a year and a half older than himself, "write to my father, and tell him that I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice." Mr. Nelson was then at Bath, whither he had gone for the recovery of his health: his circumstances were straitened, and he had no prospect of ever seeing them bettered: he knew that

it was the wish of providing for himself by which Horatio was chiefly actuated; and did not oppose his resolution; he understood also the boy's character, and had always said, that in whatever station he might be placed, he would climb if possible to the very top of the tree. Accordingly Captain Suckling was written to. "What," said he in his answer, "has poor Horatio done, who is so weak, that he, above all the rest, should be sent to rough it out at sea? But let him come; and the first time we go into action, a cannon-ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once."

It is manifest from these words, that Horatio was not the boy whom his uncle would have chosen to bring up in his own profession. He was never of a strong body; and the ague, which at that time was one of the most common diseases in England, had greatly reduced his strength; yet he had already given proofs of that resolute heart and nobleness of mind, which, during his whole career of labour and of glory, so eminently distinguished him. When a mere child, he strayed a bird's-nesting from his grandmother's house in company with a cow-boy; the dinner-hour elapsed; he was absent, and could not be found; and the alarm of the family became very great, for they apprehended that he might have been carried off by gipsies. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook which he could not get over. "I wonder, child," said the old lady when she saw him, "that hunger and fear did not drive you home." "Fear! grandmamma," replied the future hero, "I never saw fear:—What is it?" Once, after the winter holidays, when he and his brother William had set off on horseback to return to school, they came back, because there



"Fear. Grandmamma? What is it?"—p. 2.

had been a fall of snow; and William, who did not much like the journey, said it was too deep for them to venture on. "If that be the case," said the father, "you certainly shall not go; but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road is dangerous, you may return: but remember, boys, I leave it to your honour." The snow was deep enough to have afforded them a reasonable excuse; but Horatio was not to be prevailed upon to turn back. "We must go on," said he: "remember, brother, it was left to our honour." There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which the boys regarded as lawful booty, and in the highest degree tempting; but the boldest among them were afraid to venture for the prize. Horatio volunteered upon this service: he was lowered down at night from the bedroom window by some sheets, plundered the tree, was drawn up with the pears, and then distributed them among his school-fellows without reserving any for himself. "He only took them," he said, "because every other boy was afraid."

Early on a cold and dark spring morning Mr. Nelson's servant arrived at this school, at North Walsham, with the expected summons for Horatio to join his ship. The parting from his brother William, who had been for so many years his playmate and bed-fellow, was a painful effort, and was the beginning of those privations which are the sailor's lot through life. He accompanied his father to London. The *Raisonnable* was lying in the Medway. He was put into the Chatham stage, and on its arrival was set down with the rest of the passengers, and left to find his way on board as he could. After wandering about in the cold, without being able to reach the ship, an officer observed the forlorn appearance of the boy, questioned him; and, happening to be

acquainted with his uncle, took him home and gave him some refreshments. When he got on board,[1] Captain Suckling was not in the ship, nor had any person been apprised of the boy's coming. He paced the deck the whole remainder of the day, without being noticed by any one; and it was not till the second day that somebody, as he expressed it, "took compassion on him." The pain which is felt when we are first transplanted from our native soil, when the living branch is cut from the parent tree,—is one of the most poignant which we have to endure through life. There are after griefs which wound more deeply, which leave behind them scars never to be effaced, which bruise the spirit, and sometimes break the heart; but never do we feel so keenly the want of love, the necessity of being loved, and the sense of utter desertion, as when we first leave the haven of home, and are, as it were, pushed off upon the stream of life. Added to these feelings, the sea-boy has to endure physical hardships, and the privation of every comfort, even of sleep. Nelson had a feeble body and an affectionate heart, and he remembered through life his first days of wretchedness in the service.

The *Raisonnable* having been commissioned on account of the dispute respecting the Falkland Islands, was paid off as soon as the difference with the Court of Spain was accommodated, and Captain Suckling was removed to the *Triumph*, then stationed as a guardship in the Thames. This was considered as too inactive a life for a boy, and Nelson was therefore sent a voyage to the West Indies in a merchant-ship, commanded by

[1] 1770, being twelve years old. He was rated "Midshipman," and served five months and one day in the *Raisonnable*.—NELSON'S *Dispatches*.

Mr. John Rathbone, an excellent seaman, who had served as master's mate under Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*. He returned a practical seaman, but with a hatred of the king's service, and a saying then common among the sailors—"Aft the most honour; forward the better man." Rathbone had probably been disappointed and disgusted in the navy; and, with no unfriendly intentions, warned Nelson against a profession which he himself had found hopeless. His uncle received him on board the *Triumph* on his return, and discovering his dislike to the navy, took the best means of reconciling him to it. He held it out as a reward, that if he attended well to his navigation he should go in the cutter and decked long-boat, which was attached to the commanding officer's ship at Chatham. Thus he became a good pilot for vessels of that description, from Chatham to the Tower, and down the Swin Channel to the North Foreland, and acquired a confidence among rocks and sands, of which he often felt the value.

Nelson had not been many months on board the *Triumph*, when his love of enterprise was excited by hearing that two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery toward the North Pole. In consequence of the difficulties which were expected on such a service, these vessels were to take out effective men instead of the usual number of boys. This, however, did not deter him from soliciting to be received, and, by his uncle's influence, he was admitted as Coxswain under Captain Lutwidge, second in command. The voyage was undertaken in compliance with an application from the Royal Society. The Hon. Captain Constantine John Phipps, eldest son of Lord Mulgrave, volunteered his services. The *Racehorse* and *Carcass* bombs were selected, as the strongest ships, and, therefore, best adapted for

such a voyage; and they were taken into dock and strengthened, to render them as secure as possible against the ice. Two masters of Greenlandmen were employed as pilots for each ship. No expedition was ever more carefully fitted out; and the first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sandwich, with a laudable solicitude, went on board himself, before their departure, to see that everything had been completed to the wish of the officers. The ships were provided with a simple and excellent apparatus for distilling fresh from salt water, the invention of Dr. Irving, who accompanied the expedition. It consisted merely in fitting a tube to the ship's kettle, and applying a wet mop to the surface, as the vapour was passing. By these means, from thirty-four to forty gallons were produced every day.

They sailed from the Nore on the 4th of June: on the 6th of the following month they were in lat. 79° 56′ 39″; long. 9° 43′ 30″ E. The next day, about the place where most of the old discoverers had been stopped, the *Racehorse* was beset with ice; but they hove her through with ice-anchors. Capt. Phipps continued ranging along the ice, northward and westward, till the 24th; he then tried to the eastward. On the 30th he was among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships. The weather was exceedingly fine, mild and unusually clear. Here they were becalmed in a large bay, with three apparent openings between the islands which formed it; but everywhere, as far as they could see, surrounded with ice. There was not a breath of air, the water was perfectly smooth, the ice covered with snow, low and even, except a few broken pieces near the edge; and the pools of water in the middle of the ice-fields just crusted over with young ice. On the next day the ice closed upon them, and no opening was to

be seen anywhere, except a hole or lake, as it might be called, of about a mile and a half in circumference, where the ships lay fast to the ice with their ice-anchors. From these ice-fields they filled their casks with water, which was very pure and soft. The men were playing on the ice all day; but the Greenland pilots, who were further than they had ever been before, and considered that the season was far advancing, were alarmed at being thus beset.

The next day there was not the smallest opening, the ships were within less than two lengths of each other, separated by ice, and neither having room to turn. The ice, which the day before had been flat, and almost level with the water's edge, was now in many places forced higher than the mainyard, by the pieces squeezing together. A day of thick fog followed: it was succeeded by clear weather; but the passage by which the ships had entered from the westward was closed, and no open water was in sight, either in that or any other quarter. By the pilots' advice the men were set to cut a passage and warp through the small openings to the westward. They sawed through pieces of ice twelve feet thick; and this labour continued the whole day, during which their utmost efforts did not move the ships above three hundred yards; while they were driven, together with the ice, far to the N. E. and E. by the current. Sometimes a field of several acres square would be lifted up between two larger islands, and incorporated with them; and thus these larger pieces continued to grow by aggregation. Another day passed, and there seemed no probability of getting the ships out without a strong E. or N. E. wind. The season was far advanced, and every hour lessened the chance of extricating themselves. Young as he was, Nelson was appointed

to command one of the boats which were sent out to explore a passage into the open water. It was the means of saving a boat belonging to the *Racehorse* from a singular but imminent danger. Some of the officers had fired at and wounded a walrus. As no other animal has so human-like an expression in its countenance, so also is there none that seems to possess more of the passions of humanity. The wounded animal dived immediately, and brought up a number of its companions; and they all joined in an attack upon the boat. They wrested an oar from one of the men; and it was with the utmost difficulty that the crew could prevent them from staving or upsetting her, till the *Carcass's* boat came up: and the walruses, finding their enemies thus reinforced, dispersed. Young Nelson exposed himself in a more daring manner. One night, during the mid-watch, he stole from the ship with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a rising fog, and set off over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Capt. Lutwidge and his officers became exceedingly alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were seen, at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge bear. The signal for them to return was immediately made: Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey it, but in vain; his musket had flashed in the pan; their ammunition was expended; and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably preserved his life. "Never mind," he cried; "do but let me get a blow at this devil with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him." Capt. Lutwidge, however, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the desired effect of frightening the beast; and the boy then returned, somewhat afraid of the conse-

quences of his trespass. The Captain reprimanded him sternly for conduct so unworthy of the office which he filled, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. "Sir," said he, pouting his lip, as he was wont to do when agitated, "I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father."

A party were now sent to an island, about twelve miles off (named Walden's Island in the charts, from the Midshipman who was intrusted with this service), to see where the open water lay. They came back with information, that the ice, though close all about them, was open to the westward, round the point by which they came in. They said also, that upon the island they had had a fresh east wind. This intelligence considerably abated the hopes of the crew; for where they lay it had been almost calm, and their main dependence had been upon the effect of an easterly wind in clearing the bay. There was but one alternative; either to wait the result of the weather upon the ships, or to betake themselves to the boats. The likelihood that it might be necessary to sacrifice the ships had been foreseen; the boats, accordingly, were adapted, both in number and size, to transport, in case of emergency, the whole crew; and there were Dutch whalers upon the coast, in which they could all be conveyed to Europe. As for wintering where they were, that dreadful experiment had been already tried too often. No time was to be lost; the ships had driven into shoal water, having but fourteen fathoms. Should they, or the ice to which they were fast, take the ground, they must inevitably be lost; and at this time they were driving fast toward some rocks on the N.E. Captain Phipps sent for the officers of both ships, and told them his intention of preparing the boats for going away. They were immediately

hoisted out, and the fitting begun. Canvas bread-bags were made, in case it should be necessary suddenly to desert the vessels; and men were sent with the lead and line to the northward and eastward, to sound wherever they found cracks in the ice, that they might have notice before the ice took the ground; for, in that case, the ships must instantly have been crushed or overset.

On the 7th of August they began to haul the boats over the ice, Nelson having command of a four-oared cütter. The men behaved excellently well, like true British seamen: they seemed reconciled to the thought of leaving the ships, and had full confidence in their officers. About noon, the ice appeared rather more open near the vessels; and as the wind was easterly, though there was but little of it, the sails were set, and they got about a mile to the westward. They moved very slowly, and were not now nearly so far to the westward as when they were first beset. However, all sail was kept upon them, to force them through whenever the ice slacked the least. Whatever exertions were made, it could not be possible to get the boats to the water's edge before the 14th; and if the situation of the ships should not alter by that time, it would not be justifiable to stay longer by them. The commander therefore resolved to carry on both attempts together, moving the boats constantly, and taking every opportunity of getting the ships through. A party was sent out next day to the westward, to examine the state of the ice: they returned with tidings that it was very heavy and close, consisting chiefly of large fields. The ships, however, moved something, and the ice itself was drifting westward. There was a thick fog, so that it was impossible to ascertain what advantage had been gained. It continued on the 9th; but the ships were moved a little through

some very small openings: the mist cleared off in the afternoon; and it was then perceived that they had driven much more than could have been expected to the westward, and that the ice itself had driven still farther. In the course of the day they got past the boats, and took them on board again. On the morrow the wind sprang up to the N.N.E. All sail was set, and the ships forced their way through a great deal of very heavy ice. They frequently struck, and with such force, that one stroke broke a part of the *Racehorse's* best anchor; but the vessels made way, and by noon they had cleared the ice, and were out at sea. The next day they anchored in Smeerenberg Harbour, close to that island of which the westernmost point is called Hakluyt's Headland, in honour of the great promoter and compiler of our English voyages of discovery.

Here they remained a few days, that the men might rest after their fatigue. No insect was to be seen in this dreary country, nor any species of reptile—not even the common earth-worm. Large bodies of ice, called icebergs, filled up the valleys between high mountains, so dark as, when contrasted with the snow, to appear black. The colour of the ice was a lively light green. Opposite to the place where they fixed their observatory was one of these icebergs, above three hundred feet high: its side towards the sea was nearly perpendicular, and a stream of water issued from it. Large pieces frequently broke off, and rolled down into the sea. There was no thunder nor lightning during the whole time they were in these latitudes. The sky was generally loaded with hard white clouds, from which it was never entirely free, even in the clearest weather. They always knew when they were approaching the ice, long before they saw it, by a bright appearance near the horizon, which the

Greenlandmen called the blink of the ice. The season was now so far advanced, that nothing more could have been attempted, if indeed anything had been left untried; but the summer had been unusually favourable, and they had carefully surveyed the wall of ice, extending for more than twenty degrees between the latitudes of 80° and 81°, without the smallest appearance of any opening.

The ships were paid off shortly after their return to England; and Nelson was then placed by his uncle with Captain Farmer, in the *Seahorse*, then going out to the East Indies in the squadron under Sir Edward Hughes. He was stationed in the foretop at watch and watch. His good conduct attracted the attention of the master (afterwards Captain Surridge), in whose watch he was; and, upon his recommendation, the Captain rated him as midshipman. At this time his countenance was florid. and his appearance rather stout and athletic; but, when he had been about eighteen months in India, he felt the effects of that climate, so perilous to European constitutions. The disease baffled all power of medicine; he was reduced almost to a skeleton; the use of his limbs was for some time entirely lost; and the only hope that remained, was from a voyage home. Accordingly he was brought home by Captain Pigot, in the *Dolphin;* and had it not been for the attentive and careful kindness of that officer on the way, Nelson would never have lived to reach his native shores. He had formed an acquaintance with Sir Charles Pole, Sir Thomas Troubridge, and other distinguished officers, then, like himself, beginning their career: he had left them pursuing that career in full enjoyment of health and hope, and was returning from a country, in which all things were to him new. and interesting, with a body broken down by sickness, and spirits which had sunk with his strength. Long

afterwards, when the name of Nelson was known as widely as that of England itself, he spoke of the feelings which he at this time endured. "I felt impressed," said he, "with a feeling that I should never rise in my profession. My mind was staggered with a view of the difficulties I had to surmount, and the little influence I possessed. I could discover no means of reaching the object of my ambition. After a long and gloomy reverie, in which I almost wished myself overboard, a sudden glow of patriotism was kindled within me, and presented my King and country as my patron. Well, then," I exclaimed, "I will be a hero! and, confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger!"

Long afterwards Nelson loved to speak of the feelings of that moment: and from that time, he often said, a radiant orb was suspended in his mind's eye, which urged him onward to renown. The state of mind in which these feelings began is what the mystics mean by their season of darkness and desertion. If the animal spirits fail, they represent it as an actual temptation. The enthusiasm of Nelson's nature had taken a different direction, but its essence was the same. He knew to what the previous state of dejection was to be attributed; that an enfeebled body, and a mind depressed, had cast this shade over his soul: but he always seemed willing to believe, that the sunshine which succeeded bore with it a prophetic glory, and that the light which led him on, was "light from heaven."

His influence, however, was far better than he imagined. During his absence, Capt. Suckling had been made Controller of the navy; his health had materially improved upon the voyage; and, as soon as the *Dolphin* was paid off, he was appointed Acting-Lieutenant in the *Worcester*, Capt. Mark Robinson, then going out with

convoy to Gibraltar. Soon after his return, on the 8th of April, 1777, he passed his examination for a lieutenancy. Capt. Suckling sat at the head of the board; and, when the examination had ended, in a manner highly honourable to Nelson, rose from his seat, and introduced him to the examining Captains as his nephew. They expressed their wonder that he had not informed them of this relationship before; he replied, that he did not wish the younker to be favoured; he knew, his nephew would pass a good examination, and he had not been deceived. The next day Nelson received his commission as Second Lieutenant of the *Lowestoffe* frigate, Capt. William Locker, then fitting out for Jamaica.

American, and French privateers under American colours, were at that time harassing our trade in the West Indies. During one of their cruises the *Lowestoffe* captured an American privateer. Capt. Locker was extremely anxious that the privateer should be instantly taken in charge, because he feared that it would otherwise founder. He exclaimed, "Have I no officer in the ship who can board the prize?" Nelson did not offer himself immediately, waiting, with his usual sense of propriety, for the First Lieutenant's return; but, hearing the master volunteer, he jumped into the boat, saying, "It is my turn now; and if I come back, it is yours."

About this time he lost his uncle. Captain Locker, however, who had perceived the excellent qualities of Nelson, recommended him warmly to Sir Peter Parker, then Commander-in-Chief upon that station. In consequence of this recommendation he was removed into the *Bristol* flag-ship, and Lieutenant Cuthbert Collingwood, who had long been in habits of great friendship with him, succeeded him in the *Lowestoffe*. Sir Peter

Parker was the friend of both, and thus it happened that whenever Nelson got a step in rank, Collingwood succeeded him. The former soon became First Lieutenant; and on the 8th of December, 1778, was appointed Commander of the *Badger* brig, Collingwood taking his place in the *Bristol*. While the *Badger* was lying in Montego Bay, Jamaica, the *Glasgow* of 20 guns came in and anchored there, and in two hours was in flames, the steward having set fire to her while stealing rum out of the after-hold. Her crew were leaping into the water, when Nelson came up in his boats, made them throw their powder overboard, and point their guns upward; and, by his presence of mind and personal exertions, prevented the loss of life which would otherwise have ensued. On the 11th of June, 1779, he was made full captain of the *Hinchinbrook*, of 28 guns, an enemy's merchantman, sheathed with wood, which had been taken into the service.

Nelson was fortunate in possessing good influence at the time when it could be most serviceable to him. His promotion had been almost as rapid as it could be; and before he had attained the age of twenty-one he had gained that rank which brought all the honours of the service within his reach. No opportunity, indeed, had yet been given him of distinguishing himself; but he was thoroughly master of his profession, and his zeal and ability were acknowledged wherever he was known. Count D'Estaing, with a fleet of one hundred and twenty-five sail, men-of-war and transports, and a reputed force of five-and-twenty thousand men, threatened Jamaica from St. Domingo. Nelson offered his services to the Admiral and to Governor-General Dalling, and was appointed to command the batteries of Fort Charles, at Port Royal. Not more than seven thousand men could

be mustered for the defence of the island,—a number wholly inadequate to resist the force which threatened them. Of this Nelson was so well aware, that when he wrote to his friends in England, he told them they must not be surprised to hear of his learning to speak French. D'Estaing, however, was either not aware of his own superiority, or not equal to the command with which he was entrusted; he attempted nothing with his formidable armament; and General Dalling was thus left to execute a project which he had formed against the Spanish colonies.

This project was, to take Fort San Juan, on the river of that name, which flows from Lake Nicaragua into the Atlantic; make himself master of the lake itself, and of the cities of Granada and Leon; and thus cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and southern possessions in America. General Dalling's plans were well formed; but the history and the nature of the country had not been studied as accurately as its geography: the difficulties which occurred in fighting out the expedition delayed it till the season was too far advanced; and the men were thus sent to fight, not so much against an enemy, whom they would have beaten, as against a climate, which would do the enemy's work.

Early in the year 1780 five hundred men destined for this service, were convoyed by Nelson from Port Royal to Cape Gracias a Dios, in Honduras. Not a native was to be seen when they landed, February 14th: they had been taught that the English came with no other intent than that of enslaving them, and sending them to Jamaica. After a while, however, one of them ventured down, confiding in his knowledge of one of the party; and by his means the neighbouring tribes were

conciliated with presents, and brought in. The troops were encamped on a swampy and unwholesome plain, where they were joined by a regiment, from Black River, who were already in a deplorable state of sickness. Having remained here a month they proceeded to collect their Indian allies, who were to furnish proper boats for the river, and to accompany them. They reached the river San Juan March 24th, and here, according to his orders, Nelson's services were to terminate; but not a man in the expedition had ever been up the river, or knew the distance of any fortification from its mouth: and he, not being one who would turn back when so much was to be done, resolved to carry the soldiers up. It was the latter end of the dry season, the worst time for such an expedition; the river was consequently low: Indians were sent forward through narrow channels, and the men were frequently obliged to quit the boats, and exert their utmost strength to drag or thrust them along. This labour continued for several days: when they came into deeper water, they had then currents and rapids to contend with. The brunt of the labour was borne by the Indians and by the sailors—men never accustomed to stand aloof when any exertion of strength or hardihood is required. The soldiers, less accustomed to rely upon themselves, were of little use. But all equally endured the violent heat of the sun by day, and the unwholesome dews by night.

On the 9th of April they reached an island in the river, called San Bartolomeo, which the Spaniards had fortified, as an out-post. It commanded the river in a rapid and difficult part of the navigation. Nelson, at the head of a few of his seamen, leaped upon the beach. The ground upon which he sprung was so muddy, that he had some difficulty in extricating himself, and lost

his shoes: bare-footed, however, he advanced, and, in his own phrase, *boarded the battery*. The castle of San Juan is situated about sixteen miles higher up: the stores and ammunition, however, were landed a few miles below the castle, and the men had to march through woods almost impassable. One of the men was bitten under the eye by a snake, which darted upon him from the bough of a tree. He was unable to proceed from the violence of the pain: and when, after a short while, some of his comrades were sent back to assist him, he was dead, and the body already putrid. Nelson himself narrowly escaped a similar fate. He had ordered his hammock to be slung under some trees, being excessively fatigued, and was sleeping, when a monitory lizard passed across his face. The Indians happily observed the reptile, and, knowing what it indicated, awoke him. He started up, and found one of the deadliest serpents of the country coiled up at his feet. He suffered from poison of another kind; for, drinking at a spring in which some boughs of a poisonous tree had been thrown, the effects were so severe, as, in the opinion of some of his friends, to inflict a lasting injury upon his constitution.

The English appeared before San Juan two days after they had taken San Bartolomeo. Nelson's advice was, that it should instantly be carried by assault; but Nelson was not the commander, and it was thought proper to observe all the formalities of a siege. Ten days were wasted before this could be commenced. It was a work more of fatigue than of danger; but fatigue was more to be dreaded than the enemy. The rains set in, and, could the garrison have held out a little longer, disease would have rid them of their invaders. Even the Indians sunk under it, the victims of unusual

exertion, and of their own excesses. The place surrendered on the 24th. But victory procured to the conquerors none of that relief which had been expected; the castle was worse than a prison; and it contained nothing which could contribute to the recovery of the sick, or the preservation of those who were yet unaffected. The huts, which served for hospitals, were surrounded with filth, and with the putrefying hides of slaughtered cattle—almost sufficient of themselves to have engendered pestilence; and when, at last, orders were given to erect a convenient hospital, the contagion had become so general, that there were none who could work at it; for, besides the few who were able to perform garrison duty, there were not orderly men enough to assist the sick. Added to these evils, there was the want of all needful remedies; for, though the expedition had been amply provided with hospital stores, river craft enough had not been procured for transporting the requisite baggage; and when much was to be left behind, provision for sickness was that which of all things men in health would be most ready to leave. Now, when these medicines were required, the river was swollen, and so turbulent that its upward navigation was almost impracticable. At length even the task of burying the dead was more than the living could perform, and the bodies were tossed into the stream, or left for beasts of prey, and those dreadful carrion birds, which do not always wait for death before they begin their work. Five months the English persisted in what may be called this war against nature; they then left a few men, who seemed proof against the climate, to retain the castle till the Spaniards should choose to retake it, and make them prisoners. The rest abandoned their baleful conquest. Eighteen

hundred men were sent to different posts upon this wretched expedition; not more than three hundred and eighty ever returned.

Nelson himself was saved by a timely removal. In a few days after the commencement of the siege he was seized with the prevailing dysentery; meantime Captain Glover died, and Nelson was appointed to succeed him in the *Janus*. He returned to the harbour the day before San Juan surrendered, and immediately sailed for Jamaica. He was, however, so greatly reduced by the disorder, that when they reached Port Royal he was carried ashore in his cot; and finding himself, after a partial amendment, unable to retain the command of his new ship, he was compelled to ask leave to return to England, as the only means of recovery. He went immediately to Bath, in a miserable state; so helpless, that he was carried to and from his bed; and the act of moving him produced the most violent pain. In three months he recovered, and immediately hastened to London, and applied for employment. After an interval of about four months he was appointed to the *Albemarle*, of 28 guns, a French merchantman, which had been purchased from the captors for the King's service.

His health was not yet thoroughly re-established; and while he was employed in getting his ship ready, he again became so ill as hardly to be able to keep out of bed. Yet in this state, he was sent to the North Seas, and kept there the whole winter. The asperity with which he mentioned this so many years afterwards, evinces how deeply he resented a mode of conduct equally cruel to the individual and detrimental to the service. It was during the Armed Neutrality; and when they anchored off Elsineur, the Danish Admiral sent on board, desiring to be informed what ships had

arrived, and to have their force written down. "The *Albemarle*," said Nelson to the messenger, "is one of his Britannic Majesty's ships; you are at liberty, sir, to count the guns as you go down the side, and you may assure the Danish Admiral that, if necessary, they shall all be well served." During this voyage he gained a considerable knowledge of the Danish coast, greatly to the advantage of his country in after times. The *Albemarle* was not a good ship, and was several times nearly overset, in consequence of the masts having been made much too long for her. On her return to England they were shortened, and some other improvements made at Nelson's suggestion. Still he always insisted that her first owners, the French, had taught her to run away, as she was never a good sailer, except when going directly before the wind.

On their return to the Downs, while he was ashore visiting the senior officer, there came on so heavy a gale, that almost all the vessels drove, and a store ship came against the *Albemarle*. Nelson feared she would drive on the Goodwin Sands; he ran to the beach; but even the Deal boatmen thought it impossible to get on board, such was the violence of the storm. At length some of the most intrepid offered to make the attempt for fifteen guineas; and to the astonishment and fear of all the beholders, he embarked during the height of the tempest. With great difficulty and imminent danger he succeeded in reaching her. He was now ordered to Quebec, where his surgeon told him he would certainly be laid up by the climate. Many of his friends urged him to represent this to Admiral Keppel: but having received his orders from Lord Sandwich, there appeared to him an indelicacy in applying to his successor to have them altered.

Accordingly he sailed for Canada. During her first cruise on that station, the *Albemarle* captured a fishing schooner, which contained in her cargo nearly all the property that her master possessed, and the poor fellow had a large family at home anxiously expecting him. Nelson employed him as a pilot in Boston Bay, then restored him the schooner and cargo, and gave him a certificate to secure him against being captured by any other vessel. The man came off afterwards to the *Albemarle*, at the hazard of his life, with a present of sheep, poultry, and fresh provisions. A most valuable supply it proved; for the scurvy was raging on board: this was in the middle of August, and the ship's company had not had a fresh meal since the beginning of April. The certificate was preserved at Boston in memory of an act of unusual generosity; and now that the fame of Nelson has given interest to everything connected with his name, it is regarded as a relic.

At Quebec Nelson became acquainted with Alexander Davison; by whose interference he was prevented from making what would have been called an imprudent marriage. The *Albemarle* was about to leave the station, her Captain had taken leave of his friends, and was gone down the river to the place of anchorage; when the next morning, as Davison was walking on the beach, to his surprise he saw Nelson coming back in his boat. Upon inquiring the cause of this reappearance, Nelson took his arm to walk towards the town, and told him he found it utterly impossible to leave Quebec without again seeing the woman whose society had contributed so much to his happiness there, and offering her his hand. "If you do," said his friend, "your utter ruin must inevitably follow." "Then let it follow," cried Nelson, "for I am resolved to do it."

"And I," replied Davison, "am resolved you shall not." Nelson, however, upon this occasion, was less resolute than his friend, and suffered himself to be led back to the boat.

The *Albemarle* was under orders to convoy a fleet of transports to New York. "A very pretty job," said her captain, "at this late season of the year" (October was far advanced), "for our sails are at this moment frozen to the yards." On his arrival he waited on Admiral Digby, who told him he was come on a fine station for making prize-money. "Yes, sir," Nelson made answer; "but the West Indies is the station for honour." Lord Hood, with a detachment of Rodney's victorious fleet, was at that time at Sandy Hook: he had been intimate with Captain Suckling; and Nelson, who was desirous of nothing but honour, requested him to ask for the *Albemarle*, that he might go to that station where it was most likely to be obtained. Admiral Digby reluctantly parted with him. His professional merit was already well known: and Lord Hood, on introducing him to Prince William Henry, as the Duke of Clarence was then called, told the prince if he wished to ask any questions respecting naval tactics, Captain Nelson could give him as much information as any officer in the fleet. The Duke, who, to his own honour, became from that time the firm friend of Nelson, describes him as appearing the merest boy of a captain he had ever seen, dressed in a full-laced uniform, an old-fashioned waistcoat with long flaps, and his lank unpowdered hair tied in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length; making, altogether, "so remarkable a figure, that," says the Duke, "I had never seen anything like it before, nor could I imagine who he was, nor what he came about. But his address and

conversation were irresistibly pleasing; and when he spoke on professional subjects, it was with an enthusiasm that showed he was no common being."

It was expected that the French would attempt some of the passages between the Bahamas; but news soon arrived that the preliminaries of peace had been signed, and the *Albemarle* returned to England, and was paid off. Nelson's first business, after he got to London, even before he went to see his relations, was to attempt to get the wages due to his men for the various ships in which they had served during the war. "The disgust of seamen to the navy," he said, "was all owing to the infernal plan of turning them over from ship to ship; so that men could not be attached to the officers, nor the officers care the least about the men." Yet he himself was so beloved by his men, that his whole ship's company offered, if he could get a ship, to enter for her immediately. He was now, for the first time presented at Court.

CHAPTER II

Nelson goes to France during the Peace—Reappointed to the *Boreas*, and stationed at the Leeward Islands—His firm conduct concerning the American interlopers and the contractors—Marries and returns to England—Is on the point of quitting the service in disgust—Manner of life while unemployed—Appointed to the *Agamemnon* on the breaking out of the War of the French Revolution.

"I HAVE closed the war," said Nelson, in one of his letters, "without a fortune; but there is not a speck in my character. True honour, I hope, predominates in my mind far above riches." He did not apply for a ship, because he was not wealthy enough to live on board in the manner which was then become customary. Finding it, therefore, prudent to economize on his half-pay during the peace, he went to France.

In March, he was appointed to the *Boreas*, 28 guns going to the Leeward Islands, as a cruiser. His ship was full of young Midshipmen, of whom there were not less than thirty on board: and happy were they whose lot it was to be placed with such a Captain. If he perceived that a boy was afraid at first going aloft, he would say to him, in a friendly manner, "Well, sir, I am going a race to the mast-head, and beg that I may meet you there." The poor little fellow instantly began to climb, and got up how he could, Nelson never noticed in what manner; but, when they met in the top, spoke cheerfully to him, and would say, how much any person was to be pitied who fancied that getting up was either dangerous or difficult. Every day he went into the school-room, to see that they were pursuing their nautical studies; and at noon he was always the first on deck

with his quadrant. Whenever he paid a visit of ceremony, some of these youths accompanied him; and when he went to dine with the Governor at Barbádos, he took one of them in his hand, and presented him, saying, "Your Excellency must excuse me for bringing one of my Midshipmen. I make it a rule to introduce them to all the good company I can, as they have few to look up to, besides myself, during the time they are at sea."

A business of serious import soon engaged his attention. The Americans were at this time trading with our islands, taking advantage of the register of their ships, which had been issued while they were British subjects. Nelson knew that, by the Navigation Act, no foreigners, directly or indirectly, are permitted to carry on any trade with these possessions: he knew, also, that the Americans had made themselves foreigners with regard to England; and he was resolved that they should derive no profit from their former ties now. "If once," said he, "they are admitted to any kind of intercourse with our islands, when we are again embroiled in a French war, the Americans will first become the carriers of the French colonies, and then have possession of them. Here they come, sell their cargoes for ready money, go to Martinico, buy molasses, and so round and round. The residents here are Americans by connection and by interest, and are inimical to Great Britain." Nelson asked his friend Collingwood to accompany him to the Commander-in-Chief, whom he then respectfully asked, whether they were not to attend to the commerce of the country, and see that the Navigation Act was respected—that appearing to him to be the intent of keeping men-of-war upon this station in time of peace? Sir Richard Hughes replied, he had no particular orders, neither had the Admiralty sent him any

Acts of parliament. But Nelson made answer, that the Navigation Act was included in the statutes of the Admiralty, with which every Captain was furnished, and that Act was directed to Admirals, Captains, etc., to see it carried into execution. Sir Richard said he had never seen the book. Upon this Nelson produced the statutes, read the words of the Act, and apparently convinced the Commander-in-Chief, that men-of-war, as he said, "were sent abroad for some other purpose than to be made a show of." Accordingly orders were given to enforce the Navigation Act.

Collingwood, and his brother, Wilfred Collingwood, actively co-operated with Nelson. The custom-houses were informed, that after a certain day all foreign vessels found in the ports would be seized; and many were in consequence seized, and condemned in the Admiralty Court. When the *Boreas* arrived at Nevis, she found four American vessels deeply laden, and what are called the island colours flying—white, with a red cross. They were ordered to hoist their proper flag, and depart within eight-and-forty hours; but they refused to obey, denying that they were Americans. Some of their crews were then examined in Nelson's cabin, where the Judge of Admiralty happened to be present. The case was plain; they confessed that they were Americans, and that the ships, hull and cargo, were wholly American property; upon which he seized them. This raised a storm: the colonists, the custom-house, and the Governor, were all against him. Subscriptions were opened, and presently filled, for the purpose of carrying on the cause in behalf of the American captains; and the Admiral, whose flag was at that time in the roads, stood neutral. But the Americans and their abettors were not content with defensive law. The marines, whom he had sent

to secure the ships, had prevented some of the masters from going ashore; and those persons, by whose depositions it appeared that the vessels and cargoes were American property, declared that they had given their testimony under bodily fear, for that a man with a drawn sword in his hand had stood over them the whole time. A rascally lawyer, whom the party employed, suggested this story; and as the sentry at the cabin-door was a man with a drawn sword, the Americans made no scruple of swearing to this ridiculous falsehood, and commencing prosecutions against him accordingly. They laid their damages at the enormous amount of £40,000 and Nelson was obliged to keep close on board his own ship, lest he should be arrested for a sum for which it would have been impossible to find bail. The marshal frequently came on board to arrest him, but was always prevented by the address of the First Lieutenant, Mr. Wallis. One of his officers, one day, in speaking of the restraint which he was thus compelled to suffer, happened to use the word *pity!* "Pity!" exclaimed Nelson: "Pity! did you say? I shall live, sir, to be envied! and to that point I shall always direct my course."

Eight weeks he remained in this state of duress. During that time the trial respecting the detained ships came on in the Court of Admiralty. He went on shore under a protection for the day from the Judge; but, notwithstanding this, the marshal was called upon to take that opportunity of arresting him, and the merchants promised to indemnify him for so doing. The Judge, however, did his duty, and threatened to send the marshal to prison, if he attempted to violate the protection of the court. Mr. Herbert, the President of Nevis, behaved with singular generosity upon this

occasion. Though no man was a greater sufferer by the measures which Nelson had pursued, he offered in court to become his bail for £10,000, if he chose to suffer the arrest. The lawyer whom he had chosen proved to be an able as well as an honest man; and, notwithstanding the opinions and pleadings of most of the counsel of the different islands, the case was so clear, and Nelson pleaded his own cause so well, that the four ships were condemned.

But he was offended that the Government should have transmitted thanks to the Commander-in-Chief, for his activity and zeal in protecting the commerce of Great Britain. "Had they known all," said he, "I do not think they would have bestowed thanks in that quarter; and neglected me. I feel much hurt that, after the loss of health and risk of fortune, another should be thanked for what I did against his orders. I either deserve to be sent out of the service, or at least to have had some little notice taken of what I had done. They have thought it worthy of notice, and yet have neglected me. If this is the reward for a faithful discharge of my duty, I shall be careful, and never stand forward again. But I have done my duty, and have nothing to accuse myself of."

The anxiety which he had suffered from the harassing uncertainties of law is apparent from these expressions. He had, however, something to console him, for he was at this time wooing the niece of his friend the President, then in her eighteenth year, the widow of Dr. Nisbet, a physician. She had one child, a son, by name Josiah, who was three years old. One day, Mr. Herbert, who had hastened, half-dressed, to receive Nelson, exclaimed, on returning to his dressing-room, "Good God! if I did not find that great little man, of

whom everybody is so afraid, playing in the next room, under the dining-table, with Mrs. Nisbet's child!" A few days afterwards Mrs. Nisbet herself was first introduced to him, and thanked him for the partiality which he had shown to her little boy. Her manners were mild and winning; and the Captain, whose heart was easily susceptible of attachment, found no such imperious necessity for subduing his inclinations as had twice before withheld him from marrying. They were married on March 11, 1787: Prince William Henry, who had come out to the West Indies the preceding winter, being present, by his own desire, to give away the bride. Mr. Herbert, her uncle, was at this time so much displeased with his only daughter, that he had resolved to disinherit her, and leave his whole fortune, which was very great, to his niece. But Nelson, whose nature was too noble to let him profit by an act of injustice, interfered, and succeeded in reconciling the President to his child.

"Yesterday," said one of his naval friends, the day after the wedding, "the navy lost one of its greatest ornaments, by Nelson's marriage. It is a national loss that such an officer should marry: had it not been for this, Nelson would have become the greatest man in the service." The man was rightly estimated; but he who delivered this opinion did not understand the effect of domestic love and duty upon a mind of the true heroic stamp.

"We are often separate," said Nelson, in a letter to Mrs. Nisbet, a few months before their marriage; "but our affections are not by any means on that account diminished. Our country has the first demand for our services; and private convenience or happiness must ever give way to the public good. Duty is the

great business of a sea-officer: all private considerations must give way to it, however painful." "Have you not often heard," says he, in another letter, "that salt water and absence always wash away love? Now I am such a heretic as not to believe that article; for behold, every morning I have had six pails of salt water poured upon my head, and instead of finding what seamen say to be true, it goes on so contrary to the prescription, that you must, perhaps, see me before the fixed time." More frequently his correspondence breathed a deeper strain. "To write letters to you," says he, "is the next greatest pleasure I feel to receiving them from you. What I experience when I read such as I am sure are the pure sentiments of your heart, my poor pen cannot express; nor, indeed, would I give much for any pen or head which could express feelings of that kind. Absent from you, I feel no pleasure: it is you who are everything to me. Without you, I care not for this world; for I have found, lately, nothing in it but vexation and trouble. These are my present sentiments. God Almighty grant they may never change. Nor do I think they will. Indeed there is, as far as human knowledge can judge, a moral certainty that they cannot; for it must be real affection that brings us together, not interest or compulsion." Such were the feelings, and such the sense of duty, with which Nelson became a husband.

During his stay upon this station, he had ample opportunity of observing the scandalous practices of the contractors, prize-agents, and other persons in the West Indies connected with the naval service. When he was first left with the command, and bills were brought him to sign for money which was owing for goods purchased for the navy, he required the original voucher, that he

might examine whether those goods had been really purchased at the market price; but to produce vouchers would not have been convenient, and therefore was not the custom. Upon this Nelson wrote to Sir Charles Middleton, then Controller of the navy, representing the abuses which were likely to be practised in this manner. The answer which he received seemed to imply that the old forms were thought sufficient; and thus, having no alternative, he was compelled, with his eyes open, to submit to a practice originating in fraudulent intentions. The peculators were too powerful; and they succeeded not merely in impeding inquiry, but even in raising prejudices against Nelson at the Board of Admiralty, which it was many years before he could subdue.

Owing, probably, to these prejudices, and the influence of the peculators, he was treated, on his return to England, in a manner which had nearly driven him from the service. During the three years that the *Boreas* had remained upon a station which is usually so fatal, not a single officer or man of her whole complement had died. This almost unexampled instance of good health, though mostly, no doubt, imputable to a healthy season, must, in some measure, also be ascribed to the wise conduct of the Captain. He never suffered the ships to remain more than three or four weeks at a time at any of the islands; he encouraged all kinds of useful amusements; music, dancing, and cudgelling among the men; theatricals among the officers; anything which could employ their attention, and keep their spirits cheerful. The *Boreas* arrived in England in June. Nelson, who had many times been supposed to be consumptive when in the West Indies, and perhaps was saved from consumption by that climate, was still in a precarious state of

health; and the raw wet weather of one of our ungenial summers brought on cold, and sore throat, and fever: yet his vessel was kept at the Nore from the end of June till the end of November. This unworthy treatment, which more probably proceeded from intention than from neglect, excited in Nelson the strongest indignation. On the morning when orders were received to prepare the *Boreas* for being paid off, he expressed his joy saying, "It will release me for ever from an ungrateful service, for it is my firm and unalterable determination never again to set my foot on board a king's ship. Immediately after my arrival in town I shall wait on the First Lord of the Admiralty, and resign my commission." The officer to whom he thus communicated his intentions behaved in the wisest and most friendly manner; for finding it in vain to dissuade him in his present state of feeling, he secretly interfered with the First Lord to save him from a step so injurious to himself, little foreseeing how deeply the welfare and honour of England were at that moment at stake. This interference produced a letter from Lord Howe, the day before the ship was paid off, intimating a wish to see Captain Nelson as soon as he arrived in town; when, being pleased with his conversation, and perfectly convinced, by what was then explained to him, of the propriety of his conduct, he desired that he might present him to the King on the first levee-day; and the gracious manner in which Nelson was then received effectually removed his resentment.

Prejudices had been, in like manner, excited against his friend, Prince William Henry. "Nothing is wanting, sir," said Nelson, in one of his letters, "to make you the darling of the English nation, but truth. Sorry I am to say, much to the contrary has

been dispersed." This was not flattery; for Nelson was no flatterer. The letter in which this passage occurs shows in how wise and noble a manner he dealt with the Prince. One of his Royal Highness's officers had applied for a court-martial upon a point in which he was unquestionably wrong. His Royal Highness, however, while he supported his own character and authority, prevented the trial, which must have been injurious to a brave and deserving man. "Now that you are parted," said Nelson, "pardon me, my Prince, when I presume to recommend that he may stand in your royal favour as if he had never sailed with you, and that at some future day you will serve him. There only wants this to place your conduct in the highest point of view. None of us are without failings; his, was being rather too hasty. But that, put in competition with his being a good officer, will not, I am bold to say, be taken in the scale against him. More able friends than myself your Royal Highness may easily find, and of more consequence in the state; but one more attached and affectionate is not so easily met with. Princes seldom, very seldom, find a disinterested person to communicate their thoughts to. I do not pretend to be that person: but of this be assured, by a man who, I trust, never did a dishonourable act, that I am interested only that your Royal Highness should be the greatest and best man this country ever produced."

Encouraged by the conduct of Lord Howe, and by his reception at Court, Nelson renewed his attack upon the peculators with fresh spirit. In consequence, it is said, these very extensive public frauds were at length put in a proper train to be provided against in future. His representations were attended to, and every step

which he recommended was adopted. The investigation was put into a proper course, which ended in the detection and punishment of some of the culprits. An immense saving was made to Government, and thus its attention was directed to similar peculations in other parts of the colonies.

Nelson took his wife to his father's parsonage, meaning only to pay him a visit before they went to France; a project which he had formed for the sake of acquiring a competent knowledge of the French language. But his father could not bear to lose him thus unnecessarily. Mr. Nelson had long been an invalid, suffering under paralytic and asthmatic affections, which, for several hours after he rose in the morning, scarcely permitted him to speak. He had been given over by his physicians, for this complaint, nearly forty years before his death; and was, for many of his latter years, obliged to spend all his winters at Bath. The sight of his son, he declared, had given him new life. "But, Horatio," said he, "it would have been better that I had not been thus cheered, if I am so soon to be bereaved of you again. Let me, my good son, see you whilst I can. My age and infirmities increase, and I shall not last long." To such an appeal there could be no reply. Nelson took up his abode at the parsonage, and amused himself with the sports and occupations of the country. Sometimes he busied himself with farming; sometimes spent the greater part of the day in the garden, where he would dig as if for the mere pleasure of wearing himself. Sometimes he went a bird's-nesting, like a boy: and in these expeditions Mrs. Nelson always, by his express desire, accompanied him. Coursing was his favourite amusement. Shooting, as he practised it, was far too dangerous for his

companions: for he carried his gun upon the full cock, as if he were going to board an enemy; and the moment a bird rose, he let fly, without ever putting the fowling-piece to his shoulder. It is not, therefore, extraordinary, that his having once shot a partridge should be remembered by his family among the remarkable events of his life.

But his time did not pass away thus without some vexatious cares to ruffle it. The affair of the American ships was not yet over, and he was again pestered with threats of prosecution. "I have written them word," said he, "that I will have nothing to do with them, and they must act as they think proper. Government, I suppose, will do what is right, and not leave me in the lurch. We have heard enough lately of the consequences of the Navigation Act to this country. They may take my person; but it sixpence would save me from a prosecution, I would not give it." It was his great ambition at this time to possess a pony; and having resolved to purchase one, he went to a fair for that purpose. During his absence, two men abruptly entered the parsonage, and inquired for him: they then asked for Mrs. Nelson; and after they had made her repeatedly declare that she was really and truly the Captain's wife, presented her with a writ, or notification, on the part of the American captains, who now laid their damages at £20,000, and they charged her to give it to her husband on his return. Nelson having bought his pony, came home with it in high spirits. He called out his wife to admire the purchase, and listen to all its excellences: nor was it till his glee had in some measure subsided that the paper could be presented to him. His indignation was excessive; and, in the apprehension that he should be exposed to the anxieties

of the suit, and the ruinous consequences which might ensue, he exclaimed, "This affront I did not deserve! But I'll be trifled with no longer. I will write immediately to the Treasury; and, if Government will not support me, I am resolved to leave the country." Accordingly, he informed the Treasury, that if a satisfactory answer were not sent him by return of post, he should take refuge in France. To this he expected he should be driven, and for this he arranged every thing with his characteristic rapidity of decision. It was settled that he should depart immediately, and Mrs. Nelson follow under the care of his elder brother, Maurice, ten days after him. But the answer which he received from Government quieted his fears; it stated, that Captain Nelson was a very good officer, and needed to be under no apprehension, for he would assuredly be supported.

Here his disquietude upon this subject seems to have ended. Still he was not at ease; he wanted employment, and was mortified that his applications for it produced no effect. "Not being a man of fortune," he said, "was a crime which he was unable to get over, and therefore none of the great cared about him." Repeatedly he requested the Admiralty that they would not leave him to rust in indolence. His friend, Prince William, who had then been created Duke of Clarence, recommended him to Lord Chatham. The failure of this recommendation wounded him so keenly, that he again thought of retiring from the service in disgust: a resolution from which nothing but the urgent remonstrances of Lord Hood induced him to desist. Hearing that the *Raisonnable*, in which he had commenced his career, was to be commissioned, he asked for her. This also was in vain; and a coldness ensued, on his part, toward Lord

Hood, because that excellent officer did not use his influence with Lord Chatham upon this occasion. Lord Hood, however, had certainly sufficient reasons for not interfering; for he ever continued his steady friend. In the winter of 1792, when we were on the eve of the revolutionary war, Nelson once more offered his services, earnestly requested a ship, and added, that if their lordships should be pleased to appoint him to a cockle-boat, he should feel satisfied. He was answered in the usual official form: a dry acknowledgment. The fresh mortification did not, however, affect him long; for, by the joint interest of the Duke and Lord Hood, he was appointed, on the 30th of January following, to the *Agamemnon*, of 64 guns.

CHAPTER III

The *Agamemnon* sent to the Mediterranean—Commencement of Nelson's acquaintance with Sir W. Hamilton—He is sent to Corsica, to co-operate with Paoli—State of affairs in that island—Nelson undertakes the siege of Bastia, and reduces it—Takes a distinguished part in the siege of Calvi, where he loses an eye—Admiral Hotham's action—The *Agamemnon* ordered to Genoa, to co-operate with the Austrian and Sardinian forces—Gross misconduct of the Austrian General.

The *Agamemnon* was ordered to the Mediterranean, under Lord Hood. The fleet arrived in those seas at a time when the South of France would willingly have formed itself into a separate republic, under the protection of England. But Lord Hood could not take advantage of the fair occasion which presented itself; and which, if it had been seized with vigour, might have ended in dividing France; but he negotiated with the people of Toulon, to take possession provisionally of their port and city; which, fatally for themselves, was done. Before the British fleet entered, Nelson was sent with despatches to Sir William Hamilton, our envoy at the Court of Naples. Sir William, after his first interview with him, told Lady Hamilton he was about to introduce a little man to her, who could not boast of being very handsome; but such a man as he believed would one day astonish the world.

Having accomplished this mission, Nelson, received orders to join Commodore Linzee, at Tunis. Nelson found Commodore Linzee at Tunis, where he had been sent to expostulate with the Dey upon the impolicy of his supporting the revolutionary government of France.

But the French about him had completely gained the ascendancy, and all negotiation on our part proved fruitless. Shortly afterward Nelson was detached with a small squadron, to co-operate with General Paoli and the Anti-Gallican party in Corsica."

Some thirty years before this time, the heroic patriotism of the Corsicans, and of their leader, Paoli, had been the admiration of England. Corsica was under Genoese rule, but the Genoese were at this time driven out of their fortified towns, and most in a short time have been expelled. France was indebted some millions of livres to Genoa: it was not convenient to pay this money; so the French minister proposed to the Genoese, that she should discharge the debt by sending six battalions to serve in Corsica for four years. The immediate object of the French happened to be purely mercenary; they wanted to clear off their debt to Genoa; and as the presence of their troops in the island effected this, they aimed at doing the people no farther mischief.

But when the four years were expired, France purchased the sovereignty of Corsica from the Genoese. A desperate and glorious resistance was made, but it was in vain; no power interposed in behalf of these injured islanders, and the French poured in as many troops as were required. They offered to confirm Paoli in the supreme authority, only on condition that he would hold it under their government. His answer was, that "the rocks which surrounded him should melt away before he would betray a cause which he held in common with the poorest Corsican." This people then set a price upon his head. During two campaigns (1768, 1769) he kept them at bay. They overpowered him at length; he was driven to the shore, and having escaped on ship-board, took refuge in England. Paoli was wel-

comed with the honours which he deserved; a pension of £1,200 was immediately granted him; and provision was liberally made for his elder brother and his nephew.

About twenty years Paoli remained in England, enjoying the friendship of the wise, and the admiration of the good. But when the French Revolution began, it seemed as if the restoration of Corsica was at hand. The whole country, as if animated by one spirit, rose and demanded liberty; and the National Assembly passed a decree, recognizing the island as a department of France, and therefore entitled to all the privileges of the new French constitution. This satisfied the Corsicans, and Paoli, in whom the ardour of youth was passed, seeing that his countrymen were contented, and believing that they were about to enjoy a state of freedom, naturally wished to return to his native country. He resigned his pension in the year 1790, and took the oath of fidelity to France. But the course of events in France soon dispelled those hopes of a new and better order of things, which Paoli had indulged; and perceiving that a civil war was about to ensue of which no man could foresee the issue, he prepared to break the connection between Corsica and the French Republic. The Franch troops in Corsica took the field against him. But the people were with him. He repaired to Corte, the capital of the island, and was invested with the supreme authority in the state.

Paoli now opened a correspondence with Lord Hood, promising, if the English would make an attack upon St. Fiorenzo from the sea, he would at the same time attack it by land. This promise he was unable to perform; and Commodore Linzee, who, in reliance upon it, was sent upon this service, was repulsed with some loss. Lord Hood, who had now been compelled to evacuate

Toulon, suspected Paoli of intentionally deceiving him. This was an injurious suspicion. Shortly afterwards he despatched Lieutenant-Colonel (afterward Sir John) Moore and Major Koehler to confer with him upon a plan of operations. Sir Gilbert Elliot accompanied them; and it was agreed that, in consideration of the succours, both military and naval, which his Britannic Majesty should afford for the purpose of expelling the French, the island of Corsica should be delivered into the immediate possession of his Majesty, and bind itself to acquiesce in any settlement he might approve of concerning its government, and its future relation with Great Britain. While this negotiation was going on, Nelson cruised off the island with a small squadron, to prevent the enemy from throwing in supplies. Close to St. Fiorenzo the French had a storehouse of flour, near their only mill. He watched an opportunity, and landed one hundred and twenty men, who threw the flour into the sea, burnt the mill, and re-embarked before one thousand men, who were sent against him, could occasion them the loss of a single man. While he exerted himself thus, keeping out all supplies, intercepting dispatches, attacking their outposts and forts, and cutting out vessels from the bay, troops were landed, and St. Fiorenzo was besieged. The French, finding themselves unable to maintain their post, sunk one of their frigates, burnt another, and retreated to Bastia. Lord Hood submitted to General Dundas, who commanded the land forces, a plan for the reduction of this place. The General declined co-operating, thinking the attempt impracticable without a reinforcement. Upon this Lord Hood determined to reduce it with the naval force under his command; and leaving part of his fleet off Toulon, he came with the rest to Bastia.

These men were landed on the 4th of April, under Lieutenant-Colonel Villettes and Nelson, who had now acquired from the army the title of BRIGADIER. Guns were dragged by the sailors up heights where it appeared almost impossible to convey them; a work of the greatest difficulty, and which Nelson said could never, in his opinion, have been accomplished by any but British seamen. The soldiers, though less dexterous in such service, because not accustomed, like sailors, to habitual dexterity, behaved with equal spirit. The French had improved the leisure which our military commander had allowed them; and before Lord Hood commenced his operations, he had the mortification of seeing that the enemy were every day erecting new works, strengthening old ones, and rendering the attempt more difficult. The siege, however, was not sustained with firmness by the British. On the 19th of May a treaty of capitulation was begun: that same evening the troops from St. Fiorenzo made their appearance on the hills; and, on the following morning, a French General arrived to take possession of Bastia.

The *Agamemnon* was now despatched to co-operate at the siege of Calvi with General Sir Charles Stuart. Nelson had less responsibility here than at Bastia; and was acting with a man after his own heart, who was never sparing of himself, and slept every night in the advanced battery. But the service was not less hard than that of the former siege. "We will fag ourselves to death," said he to Lord Hood, "before any blame shall lie at our doors. I trust it will not be forgotten, that twenty-five pieces of heavy ordnance have been dragged to the different batteries, mounted, and all but three fought by seamen, except one artilleryman to point the guns." The climate proved more destructive than

the service. Of two thousand men, about half were sick, and the rest like so many phantoms. Nelson described himself as the reed among the oaks, bowing before the storm when they were laid low by it. "All the prevailing disorders have attacked me," said he, "but I have not strength enough for them to fasten on." The loss from the enemy was not great; but Nelson received a serious injury: a shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand and small gravel into one of his eyes. He spoke of it slightly at the time: writing the same day to Lord Hood, he only said, that he got a little hurt that morning, not much; and the next day, he said, he should be able to attend his duty in the evening. In fact, he suffered it to confine him only one day; but the sight was lost.

After the fall of Calvi, his services were, by a strange omission, altogether overlooked; and his name was not even mentioned in the list of wounded. Nelson felt himself neglected. "One hundred and ten days," said he, "I have been actually engaged, at sea and on shore, against the enemy. I do not know that any one has done more. I have had the comfort to be always applauded by my Commander-in Chief, but never to be rewarded; and, what is more mortifying, for services in which I have been wounded, others have been praised, who at the same time were actually in bed, far from the scene of action. They have not done me justice. But never mind, I'll have a gazette of my own."

The affairs of the Mediterranean wore at this time a gloomy aspect. The arts, as well as the arms of the enemy, were gaining the ascendancy there. Tuscany concluded peace with France. Corsica was in danger. We had taken that island for ourselves, annexed it formally to the Crown of Great Britain, and given it a

constitution as free as our own. Corsica was now loudly threatened. The French, who had not yet been taught to feel their own inferiority upon the seas, braved us in contempt upon that element. They had a superior fleet in the Mediterranean and they sent it out with express orders to seek the English and engage them. Accordingly the Toulon fleet, consisting of seventeen ships of the line, and five smaller vessels, put to sea. Admiral Hotham received this information at Leghorn, and sailed immediately in search of them. He had with him fourteen sail of the line, and one Neapolitan seventy-four; but his ships were only half manned, containing but seven thousand six hundred and fifty men, whereas the enemy had sixteen thousand nine hundred. He soon came in sight of them. A general action was expected, and Nelson, as was his custom on such occasions, wrote a hasty letter to his wife, as that which might possibly contain his last farewell. "The lives of all," said he, "are in the hand of Him who knows best whether to preserve mine or not; my character and good name are in my own keeping."

But however confident the French government might be of their naval superiority, the officers had no such feeling; and after manœuvring for a day in sight of the English fleet, they suffered themselves to be chased. A French ship of 84 guns, having been dismasted, sheered off, towed by a powerful frigate, and supported by two large ships of the line. The *Agamemnon*, though only 64, stood out boldly after the retiring enemy; and Nelson's manœuvres were so skilful that he all but destroyed the crippled Frenchman, and kept the whole hostile squadron at bay without incurring any serious loss. The injured ship, with one of her supporters, was easily captured a few hours afterwards; and

had Admiral Hotham followed Nelson's advice the whole French fleet would have been brought to action and have probably met a complete defeat.

About this time (June, 1795) Nelson was made Colonel of Marines—a mark of approbation which he had long wished for rather than expected. It came in good season, for his spirits were oppressed by the thought that his services had not been acknowledged as they deserved.

He now entered upon a new line of service. The Austrian and Sardinian armies, under General de Vins, required a British squadron to co-operate with them in driving the French from the Riviera di Genoa, and as Nelson had been so much in the habit of soldiering, it was immediately fixed that the brigadier should go. He sailed from St. Fiorenzo on this destination; but fell in off Cape del Mele, with the enemy's fleet, who immediately gave his squadron chase. The chase lasted four-and-twenty hours; and owing to the fickleness of the wind, the British ships were sometimes hard pressed; but the want of skill on the part of the French gave Nelson many advantages. He bent his way back to St. Fiorenzo, where the fleet, which was in the midst of watering and refitting, had for seven hours the mortification of seeing him almost in possession of the enemy, before the wind would allow them to put out to his assistance. The French, however, at evening, went off, not choosing to approach nearer the shore. During the night, Admiral Hotham, by great exertions, got under weigh; and, having sought the enemy four days, came in sight of them on the fifth. Baffling winds, and vexatious calms, so common in the Mediterranean, rendered it impossible to close with them; only a partial action could be brought on: and then the firing made

a perfect calm. The French, being to windward, drew inshore; and the English fleet was becalmed six or seven miles to the westward. A French ship of 74 guns struck; but before she could be taken possession of, a box of combustibles in her fore-top took fire. So rapid was the conflagration, that the hull, the masts, and sails, all seemed to take fire at the same moment; and though the English boats were put out to the assistance of the poor wretches on board, not more than two hundred could be saved. The *Agamemnon*, and Captain Rowley, in the *Cumberland*, were just getting into close action a second time, when the Admiral called them off, the wind now blowing directly into the Gulf of Frejus, where the enemy anchored after the evening closed.

Nelson now proceeded to his station with eight sail of frigates under his command. Arriving at Genoa he had a conference with Mr. Drake, the British Envoy to that State; the result of which was, that the object of the British must be to put an entire stop to all trade between Genoa, France, and the places occupied by the French troops; for, unless this trade were stopped, it would be scarcely possible for the allied armies to hold their situation, and impossible for them to make any progress in driving the enemy out of the Riviera di Genoa.

When Nelson first saw General de Vins, he thought him an able man, who was willing to act with vigour. The General charged his inactivity upon the Piedmontese and Neapolitans, whom, he said, nothing could induce to act; and he concerted a plan with Nelson for embarking a part of the Austrian army, and landing it in the rear of the French. But the English Commodore soon began to suspect that the Austrian General was little disposed to any active operations. In the

hope of spurring him on, he wrote to him, telling him that he had surveyed the coast to the westward as far as Nice, and would undertake to embark four or five thousand men, with their arms and a few days' provisions, on board the squadron, and land them within two miles of St. Remo, with their field-pieces. St. Remo was the only place between Vado and Ville Franche where the squadron could lie in safety, and anchor in almost all winds. The bay was not as good as Vado for large ships; but it had a mole, which Vado had not, where all small vessels could lie, and load and unload their cargoes. This bay being in possession of the allies, Nice could be completely blockaded by sea. General de Vins, affecting in his reply to consider that Nelson's proposal had no other end than that of obtaining the Bay of St. Remo as a station for the ships, told him, what he well knew, and had expressed before, that Vado Bay was a better anchorage; nevertheless, if Nelson was well assured that part of the fleet could winter there, there was no risk to which he would not expose himself with pleasure, for the sake of procuring a safe station for the vessels of his Britannic Majesty. Nelson soon assured the Austrian commander that this was not the object of his memorial. He now began to suspect that both the Austrian Court and their General had other ends in view than the cause of the allies.

Nelson again addressed De Vins, requesting only to know the time, and the number of troops ready to embark; then he would, he said, despatch a ship to Admiral Hotham, requesting transports, having no doubt of obtaining them, and trusting that the plan would be successful to its fullest extent. He replied, that as soon as Nelson could declare himself ready with the vessels necessary for conveying ten thousand men, with

their artillery and baggage, he would put the army in motion. But Nelson was not enabled to do this: Admiral Hotham pursued a cautious system, ill according with the bold and comprehensive views of Nelson.

There was no unity in the views of the allied powers, no cordiality in their co-operation, no energy in their councils. The neutral powers assisted France more effectually than the allies assisted each other. The Genoese ports were at this time filled with French privateers, and French vessels were allowed to tow out of the port of Genoa itself, board vessels which were coming in, and then return into the mole. This was allowed without a remonstrance; while, though Nelson abstained most carefully from offering any offence to the Genoese territory or flag, complaints were so repeatedly made against his squadron, that, he says, it seemed a trial who should be tired first; they of complaining, or he of answering their complaints.

But the question of neutrality was soon at an end. An Austrian Commissary was travelling from Genoa towards Vado. It was known that he was to sleep at Voltri, and that he had £10,000 with him, a booty which the French Minister in that city, and the Captain of a French frigate in that port, considered as far more important than the word of honour of the one, the duties of the other, and the laws of neutrality. The boats of the frigate went out with some privateers, landed, robbed the Commissary, and brought back the money to Genoa. The next day men were publicly enlisted in that city for the French army: seven hundred men were embarked, with seven thousand stand of arms, on board the frigates and other vessels, who were to land between Voltri and Savona. There a detachment from the French army was to join them, and the Genoese peasantry were

to be invited to insurrection, a measure for which everything had been prepared. The night of the 13th was fixed for the sailing of this expedition. The Austrians called loudly for Nelson to prevent it; and he, on the evening of the 13th, arrived at Genoa. His presence checked the plan, but it led to ill consequences, which Nelson foresaw, but for want of sufficient force was unable to prevent. His squadron was too small for the service which it had to perform.

General de Vins demanded satisfaction of the Genoese government for the seizure of his Commissary; and then, without waiting for their reply, took possession of some empty magazines of the French, and pushed his sentinels to the very gates of Genoa. Had he done so at first, he would have found the magazines full; but timed as the measure was, and unless as it was to the cause of the allies, it was in character with the whole of the Austrian General's conduct; and it is no small proof of the dexterity with which he served the enemy, that in such circumstances he could so act with Genoa, as to contrive to put himself in the wrong. Nelson was at this time, according to his own expression, placed in a cleft stick. Mr. Drake, the Austrian Minister, and the Austrian General, all joined in requiring him not to leave Genoa: if he left that port unguarded, they said, not only the imperial troops at St. Pier d'Arena and Voltri would be lost, but the French plan for taking post between Voltri and Savona would certainly succeed; if the Austrians should be worsted in the advanced posts, the loss of the army would be imputed to him for having left Genoa. On the other hand, he knew that if he were not at Pietra, the enemy's gunboats would harass the left flank of the Austrians, who, if they were defeated, as was to be expected, from the spirit of all their opera-

tions, would very probably lay their defeat to the want of assistance from the *Agamemnon*. Had the force for which Nelson applied been given him, he could have attended to both objects; and he would have disconcerted the plans of the French in spite of the Austrian General. He had foreseen the danger, and pointed out how it might be prevented; but the means of preventing it were withheld. The attack was made as he foresaw. General de Vins gave up the command in the middle of the battle, pleading ill health. "From that moment," says Nelson, "not a soldier stayed at his post; it was 'the devil take the hindmost.' Many thousands ran away who had never seen the enemy; some of them thirty miles from the advanced posts. Had I not, though I own against my inclination, been kept at Genoa, from eight to ten thousand men would have been taken prisoners, and amongst the number General de Vins himself. The oldest officers say they never heard of so complete a defeat, and certainly without any reason. Thus has ended my campaign. We have established the French Republic, which, but for us, I verily believe, would never have been settled by such a volatile, changeable people."

The defeat of General de Vins gave the enemy possession of the Genoese coast from Savona to Voltri; and it deprived the Austrians of their direct communication with the English fleet. The *Agamemnon*, therefore, could no longer be useful on this station, and Nelson sailed for Leghorn to refit.

CHAPTER IV

Sir J. Jervis takes the command—Genoa joins the French—Buonaparte begins his career—Evacuation of Corsica—Nelson hoists his broad pendant in the *Minerve*—Action with the *Sabina*—Battle off Cape St. Vincent—Nelson commands the inner squadron at the blockade of Cadiz—Boat action in the Bay of Cadiz—Expedition against Teneriffe—Nelson loses an arm—His sufferings in England, and recovery.

SIR JOHN JERVIS had now arrived to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet. The *Agamemnon* having, as her Captain said, been made as fit for sea as a rotten ship could be, Nelson sailed from Leghorn, and joined the Admiral in Fiorenzo Bay. The manner in which Nelson was received is said to have excited some envy. One Captain observed to him: "You did just as you pleased in Lord Hood's time, the same in Admiral Hotham's, and now again with Sir John Jervis: it makes no difference to you who is Commander-in-Chief." A higher compliment could not have been paid to any Commander-in-Chief, than to say of him, that he understood the merits of Nelson, and left him, as far as possible, to act upon his own judgment.

Sir John Jervis asked Nelson if he should have any objection to serve under him with his flag. He replied, that he should, on many accounts, wish to return to England; still, if the war continued, he should be very proud of hoisting his flag under Sir John's command. "We cannot spare you," said Sir John, "either as Captain or Admiral." Accordingly, he resumed his station in the Gulf of Genoa.

General Beaulieu, who had now superseded De Vins in the command of the allied Austrian and Sardinian army, sent his nephew and aide-de-camp to communi-

cate with Nelson, and enquire whether he could anchor in any other place than Vado Bay. Nelson replied, that Vado was the only place where the British fleet could lie in safety; but all places would suit his squadron, and wherever the General came down to the sea-coast, there he should find it. But all plans of co-operation with the Austrians were soon frustrated by the battle of Montenotte. Beaulieu ordered an attack to be made upon the post of Voltri. It was made twelve hours before the time which he had fixed, and before he arrived to direct it. In consequence, the French were enabled to effect their retreat, and fall back to Montenotte; thus giving the troops there a decisive superiority in number over the division which attacked them. This drew on the defeat of the Austrians. Buonaparte, with a celerity which had never before been witnessed in modern war, pursued his advantages; and in the course of a fortnight dictated to the Court of Turin terms of peace, or rather of submission, by which all the strongest places of Piedmont were put into his hands.

On one occasion, and only on one, Nelson was able to impede the progress of this new conqueror. Six vessels, laden with cannon and ordnance stores for the siege of Mantua, sailed from Toulon for St. Pier d'Arena. Assisted by Captain Cockburn, in the *Meleager*, he drove them under a battery, pursued them, silenced the batteries, and captured the whole. The loss of this artillery was one of the chief causes which compelled the French to raise the siege of Mantua; but there was too much treachery, and too much imbecility, both in the councils and armies of the allied powers, for Austria to improve this momentary success. Buonaparte perceived that the conquest of all Italy was within his reach. In open contempt of the rights of

neutral and of friendly powers, he entered Tuscany, and took possession of Leghorn. In consequence of this movement, Nelson blockaded that port, and landed a British force in the Isle of Elba, to secure Porto Ferrajo. Soon afterwards he took the island of Capraja which had formerly belonged to Corsica.

Genoa had now taken part with France. Its government had long covertly assisted the French, and now willingly yielded to the first compulsory menace which required them to exclude the English from their ports. Capraja was seized in consequence; but this act of vigour was not followed up as it ought to have been. It was determined by the British Cabinet to evacuate Corsica as soon as Spain should form an offensive alliance with France. This event, which, from the moment that Spain had been compelled to make peace was clearly foreseen, had now taken place; and orders for the evacuation of the island were immediately sent out.

The viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliot, deeply felt the impolicy and ignominy of the evacuation. The fleet also was ordered to leave the Mediterranean. Nelson exclaimed:—" Do his Majesty's ministers know their own minds? They at home," said he, " do not know what this fleet is capable of performing—anything and everything. Much as I shall rejoice to see England, I lament our present orders in sackcloth and ashes, so dishonourable to the dignity of England, whose fleets are equal to meet the world in arms: and of all the fleets I ever saw, I never beheld one, in point of officers and men, equal to Sir John Jervis's, who is a Commander-in-Chief able to lead them to glory."

Having effected this humiliating service, Nelson was ordered to proceed to Porto Ferrajo, and superintend the evacuation of that place also.

General de Burgh, who commanded at the Isle of Elba, did not think himself authorised to abandon the place, till he had received specific instructions from England to that effect. But Naples having made peace, Sir J. Jervis considered his business with Italy as concluded; and the protection of Portugal was the point to which he was now instructed to attend. Nelson, therefore, whose orders were perfectly clear and explicit, withdrew the whole naval establishment from that station and left the Mediterranean and proceeded to the westward in search of the Admiral. Off the mouth of the Straits he fell in with the Spanish fleet; and reaching the station off Cape St. Vincent, communicated this intelligence to Sir John Jervis. Before sunset the signal was made to prepare for action, and to keep during the night in close order. At daybreak the enemy were in sight. The British force consisted of two ships of 100 guns, two of 98 guns, two of 90 guns, eight of 74 guns, and one of 64 guns; fifteen of the line in all; with four frigates, a sloop, and a cutter. The Spaniards had one four-decker of 136 guns; six three-deckers of 112 guns; two, of 84 guns; eighteen, of 74 guns; in all twenty-seven ships of the line, with ten frigates and a brig. Their Admiral, Don Joseph de Cordova, had learnt from an American that the English had only nine ships, which was indeed the case when his informer had seen them. Upon this information, the Spanish Commander, instead of going into Cadiz, as was his intention, determined to seek an enemy so inferior in force; and relying, with fatal confidence upon the American account, he suffered his ships to remain too far dispersed, and in some disorder. When the morning broke, and discovered the English fleet, a fog for some time concealed their number. That fleet had heard their signal-guns during the night, the weather

being fine, though thick and hazy; soon after daylight they were seen very much scattered, while the British ships were in a compact little body. The look-out ship of the Spaniards, fancying that her signal was disregarded because so little notice seemed to be taken of it, made another signal, that the English force consisted of forty sail of the line. The Captain afterwards said, he did this to rouse the Admiral: it had the effect of perplexing him, and alarming the whole fleet.

Before the enemy could form a regular order of battle, Sir J. Jervis came up with them, passed through their fleet, then tacked, and thus cut off nine of their ships from the main body. The Admiral was now able to direct his attentión to the enemy's main body, which was still superior in number to his whole fleet, and greatly so in weight of metal. He made signal to tack in succession. Nelson, whose station was in the rear of the British line, perceived that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind, with an intention of joining their separated ships; or else, of getting off without an engagement. To prevent either of these schemes, he disobeyed the signal without a moment's hesitation, and ordered his ship to be wore. This at once brought him into action with the *Santissima Trinidad*, 136 guns, the *San Joseph*, 112 guns, the *Salvador del Mundo*, 112 guns, the *San Nicolas*, 80 guns, the *San Isidro*, 74 guns, another 74 guns, and another first-rate. Troubridge, in the *Culloden*, immediately joined, and most nobly supported him; and for nearly an hour did the *Culloden* and Captain maintain what Nelson called "this apparently, but not really unequal contest." The *Blenheim* then passing between them and the enemy gave them a respite, and poured in her fire upon the Spaniards. The *Salvador del Mundo* and *San Isidro* dropped astern, and

were fired into in a masterly style, by the *Excellent* Captain Collingwood. The *San Isidro* struck; and Nelson thought that the *Salvador* struck also.

Captain Berry, who had lately been Nelson's First Lieutenant, was the first man who leaped into the enemy's mizen-chains. Miller, when in the very act of going, was ordered by Nelson to remain. A soldier of the sixty-ninth broke the upper quarter-gallery window, and jumped in, followed by the Commodore himself, and by others as fast as possible. The cabin doors were fastened, and the Spanish officers fired their pistols at them through the window: the doors were soon forced, and the Spanish Brigadier fell while retreating to the quarter-deck. Nelson pushed on, and found Berry in possession of the poop and the Spanish ensign hauling down. He passed on to the forecastle, where he met two or three Spanish officers, and received their swords. The English were now in full possession of every part of the ship; when a fire of pistols and musketry opened upon them from the Admiral's stern-gallery of the *San Joseph*. Nelson having placed sentinels at the different ladders, and ordered Captain Miller to send more men into the prize, gave orders for boarding that ship from the *San Nicolas*. It was done in an instant, he himself leading the way, and exclaiming—"Westminster Abbey or victory!" Berry assisted him into the main chains; and at that moment a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck-rail, and said they surrendered. It was not long before he was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish Captain presented to him his sword, and told him the Admiral was below, dying of his wounds. There, on the quarter-deck of an enemy's first-rate, he received the swords of the officers; giving them, as they were delivered, one by one, to

William Fearney, one of his old *Agamemnons* who, with the utmost coolness, put them under his arm.

The Spaniards had still eighteen or nineteen ships which had suffered little or no injury; that part of the fleet which had been separated from the main body in the morning was now coming up, and Sir John Jervis made signal to bring to. The Spanish Admiral meantime being altogether undecided in his own opinion respecting the state of the fleet, inquired of his Captains whether it was proper to renew the action. Nine of them answered explicitly, that it was not; others replied, that it was expedient to delay the business.

As soon as the action was discontinued, Nelson went on board the Admiral's ship. Sir John Jervis received him on the quarter-deck, took him in his arms, and said he could not sufficiently thank him. For this victory the Commander-in-Chief was rewarded with the title of Earl St. Vincent. Nelson, who, before the action was known in England, had been advanced to the rank of Rear-Admiral, had the Order of the Bath given him. The sword of the Spanish Rear-Admiral, which Sir John Jervis insisted upon his keeping, he presented to the Mayor and Corporation of Norwich, saying, that he knew no place where it could give him or his family more pleasure to have it kept, than in the capital city of the county where he was born. The freedom of that city was voted him on this occasion. But of all the numerous congratulations which he received, none could have affected him with deeper delight than that which came from his venerable father. "I thank my God," said this excellent man, "with all the power of a grateful soul, for the mercies he has most graciously bestowed on me in preserving

you. Not only my few acquaintances here, but the people in general, met me at every corner with such handsome words, that I was obliged to retire from the public eye. The height of glory to which your professional judgment, united with a proper degree of bravery, guarded by Providence, has raised you, few sons, my dear child, attain to, and fewer fathers live to see. Tears of joy have involuntarily trickled down my furrowed cheeks: Who could stand the force of such general congratulation? The name and services of Nelson have sounded through this city of Bath—from the common ballad-singer to the public theatre." The good old man concluded by telling him, that the field of glory, in which he had so long been conspicuous, was still open, and by giving him his blessing.

Sir Horatio, who had now hoisted his flag as Rear-Admiral of the Blue, was sent to bring away the troops from Porto Ferrajo; having performed this, he shifted his flag to the *Theseus*. That ship had taken part in the mutiny in England, and being just arrived from home, some danger was apprehended from the temper of the men. This was one reason why Nelson was removed to her. He had not been on board many weeks before a paper, signed in the name of all the ship's company, was dropped on the quarter-deck, containing these words: "Success attend Admiral Nelson! God bless Captain Miller! We thank them for the officers they have placed over us. We are happy and comfortable, and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support them."

While Sir Horatio was in the *Theseus*, he was employed in the command of the inner squadron at the blockade of Cadiz. During this service, the most perilous action occurred in which he was ever engaged.

Making a night attack upon the Spanish gunboats, his barge was attacked by an armed launch carrying twenty-six men. Nelson had with him only his ten bargemen, Captain Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, an old and faithful follower, who twice saved the life of his Admiral, by parrying the blows that were aimed at him, and at last actually interposed his own head to receive the blow of a Spanish sabre, which he could not by any other means avert; thus dearly was Nelson beloved. This was a desperate service—hand to hand with swords; and Nelson always considered that his personal courage was more conspicuous on this occasion than on any other during his whole life. Notwithstanding the great disproportion of numbers, eighteen of the enemy were killed, all the rest wounded, and their launch taken.

Twelve days after this rencontre, Nelson sailed at the head of an expedition against Teneriffe. A report had prevailed a few months before, that the Viceroy of Mexico, with the treasure ships, had put into that island. This had led Nelson to meditate the plan of an attack upon it, which he communicated to Earl St. Vincent.

The report concerning the Viceroy was unfounded; but a homeward-bound Manilla ship put into Santa Cruz at this time, and the expedition was determined upon. The plan was, that the boats should land in the night, between the fort on the N.E. side of Santa Cruz Bay and the town, make themselves masters of that fort, and then send a summons to the Governor. By midnight the three frigates, having the force on board which was intended for this debarkation, approached within three miles of the place; but, owing to a strong gale of wind in the offing, and a strong current against them in-shore, they were not able to get within a mile of the landing-place before daybreak; and then they were seen, and their

intention discovered. It was then resolved that they should attempt to get possession of the heights above the fort. The frigates accordingly landed their men; and Nelson stood in with the line-of-battle ships, meaning to batter the fort for the purpose of distracting the attention of the garrison. A calm and contrary current hindered him from getting within a league of the shore; and the heights were by this time so secured, and manned with such a force, as to be judged impracticable. Thus foiled in his plans by circumstances of wind and tide, he still considered it a point of honour that some attempt should be made. This was on the twenty-second of July: he re-embarked his men that night, got the ships on the twenty-fourth, to anchor about two miles north of the town, and made show as if he intended to attack the heights. At six in the evening, signal was made for the boats to prepare to proceed on the service as previously ordered.

At eleven o'clock the boats, containing between six and seven hundred men, proceeded in six divisions toward the town. They were to land on the mole, and thence hasten, as fast as possible, into the great square; then form, and proceed as should be found expedient. They were not discovered till about half past one o'clock, when, being within half gun-shot of the landing-place, Nelson directed the boats to cast off from each other, give a huzza, and push for the shore. But the Spaniards were exceedingly well prepared: the alarm-bells answered the huzza, and a fire of thirty or forty pieces of cannon, with musketry from one end of the town to the other, opened upon the invaders. Nothing, however, could check the intrepidity with which they advanced. The night was exceedingly dark: most of the boats missed the mole, and went on shore through a raging surf, which

stove all to the left of it. Four or five other boats found the mole: they stormed it instantly, and carried it, though it was defended, as they imagined, by four or five hundred men. Its guns, which were six-and-twenty pounders, were spiked; but such a heavy fire of musketry and grape was kept up from the citadel and the houses at the head of the mole, that the assailants could not advance, and nearly all of them were killed or wounded.

In the act of stepping out of the boat, Nelson received a shot through the right elbow, and fell; but as he fell he caught the sword which he had just drawn in his left hand, determined never to part with it while he lived, for it had belonged to his uncle, Captain Suckling, and he valued it like a relic. Nisbet, who was close to him, placed him at the bottom of the boat, and laid his hat over the shattered arm, lest the sight of the blood, which gushed out in great abundance, should increase his faintness. He then examined the wound, and taking some silk handkerchiefs from his neck, bound them round tight above the lacerated vessels. One of his bargemen, by name Lovel, tore his shirt into shreds, and made a sling with them for the broken limb. They then collected five other seamen, by whose assistance they succeeded at length in getting the boat afloat; for it had grounded with the falling tide. Nisbet took one of the oars, and ordered the steersman to go close under the guns of the battery, that they might be safe from its tremendous fire. Hearing his voice, Nelson roused himself, and desired to be lifted up in the boat, that he might look about him. Nisbet raised him up; but nothing could be seen, except the firing of the guns on shore, and what could be discerned by their flashes upon the stormy sea. In a few minutes a general shriek was heard from the crew of the *Fox*, which had received a

shot under water, and went down. Ninety-seven men were lost in her; eighty-three were saved, many by Nelson himself, whose exertions on this occasion greatly increased the pain and danger of his wound. The first ship which the boat could reach happened to be the *Seahorse;* but nothing could induce him to go on board, though he was assured that if they attempted to row to another ship, it might be at the risk of his life. "I had rather suffer death," he replied, "than alarm Mrs. Freemantle, by letting her see me in this state, when I can give her no tidings whatever of her husband." They pushed on for the *Theseus*. When they came alongside, he peremptorily refused all assistance in getting on board, so impatient was he that the boat should return, in hopes that it might save a few more from the *Fox*. He desired to have only a single rope thrown over the side, which he twisted round his left hand, saying, "Let me alone; I have yet my legs left and one arm. Tell the surgeon to make haste and get his instruments. I know I must lose my right arm, so the sooner it is off the better." The spirit which he displayed in jumping up the ship's side astonished everybody.

Freemantle had been severely wounded in the right arm soon after the Admiral. He was fortunate enough to find a boat on the beach, and got instantly to his ship. Thompson was wounded; Bowen killed, to the great regret of Nelson; as was also one of his own officers, Lieutenant Weatherhead, who had followed him from the *Agamemnon*, and whom he greatly and deservedly esteemed. Troubridge, meantime, fortunately for his party, missed the mole in the darkness, but pushed on shore under the batteries, close to the south end of the citadel. Captain Waller of the *Emerald*, and two or three other boats, landed at the same time. The surf

was so high that many others put back. The boats were instantly filled with water, and stove against the rocks; and most of the ammunition in the men's pouches was wetted. Having collected a few men, they pushed on to the great square, hoping there to find the Admiral and the rest of the force. The ladders were all lost, so that they could make no immediate attempt on the citadel; but they sent a sergeant with two of the towns-people to summon it. This messenger never returned; and Troubridge having waited about an hour, in painful expectation of his friends, marched to join Captains Hood and Miller, who had effected their landing to the south-west. They then endeavoured to procure some intelligence of the Admiral and the rest of the officers, but without success. By daybreak they had gathered together about eighty marines, eighty pikemen, and one hundred and eighty small-arm seamen; all the survivors of those who had made good their landing. They obtained some ammunition from the prisoners whom they had taken, and marched on to try what could be done at the citadel without ladders. They found all the streets commanded by field-pieces, and several thousand Spaniards, with about a hundred French, under arms, approaching by every avenue. Finding himself without provisions, the powder wet, and no possibility of obtaining either stores or reinforcements from the ships, the boats being lost, Troubridge, with great presence of mind, sent Captain Samuel Hood with a flag of truce to the Governor, to say he was prepared to burn the town, and would instantly set fire to it if the Spaniards approached one inch nearer. This, however, if he were compelled to do it, he should do with regret; for he had no wish to injure the inhabitants, and he was ready to treat upon these terms,—that the British troops should re-embark

with all their arms, of every kind, and take their own boats, if they were saved, or be provided with such others as might be wanting; they, on their part, engaging that the squadron should not molest the town, nor any of the Canary islands; all prisoners on both sides to be given up. When these terms were proposed, the Governor made answer, that the English ought to surrender as prisoners of war; but Captain Hood replied, he was instructed to say, that if the terms were not accepted in five minutes, Captain Troubridge would set the town on fire, and attack the Spaniards at the point of the bayonet. Satisfied with his success, which was indeed sufficiently, complete, and respecting, like a brave and honourable man, the gallantry of his enemy, the Spaniard acceded to the proposal, found boats to re-embark them, their own having all been dashed to pieces in landing, and before they parted gave every man a loaf and a pint of wine. "And here," says Nelson in his *Journal*, "it is right we should notice the noble and generous conduct of Don Juan Antonio Gutierrez, the Spanish Governor. The moment the terms were agreed to, he directed our wounded men to be received into the hospitals, and all our people to be supplied with the best provisions that could be procured; and made it known, that the ships were at liberty to send on shore, and purchase whatever refreshments they were in want of during the time they might be off the island." A youth, by name Don Bernardo Collagon, stripped himself of his shirt, to make bandages for one of those Englishmen, against whom, not an hour before, he had been engaged in battle. Nelson wrote to thank the Governor for the humanity which he had displayed. Presents were interchanged between them. Sir Horatio offered to take charge of his dispatches for the Spanish

government; and thus actually became the first messenger to Spain of his own defeat.

The total loss of the English, in killed, wounded, and drowned, amounted to two hundred and fifty. Nelson made no mention of his own wound in his official dispatches; but in a private letter to Lord St. Vincent, the first which he wrote with his left hand, he shows himself to have been deeply affected by the failure of this enterprise. "I am become," he said, "a burthen to my friends, and useless to my country; but by my last letter you will perceive my anxiety for the promotion of my son-in-law, Josiah Nisbet. When I leave your command, I become dead to the world: 'I go hence, and am no more seen.' If from poor Bowen's loss you think it proper to oblige me, I rest confident you will do it. The boy is under obligations to me; but he repaid me by bringing me from the mole of Santa Cruz. I hope you will be able to give me a frigate to convey the remains of my carcass to England." "A left-handed Admiral," he said in a subsequent letter, "will never again be considered as useful; therefore the sooner I get to a very humble cottage the better, and make room for a sounder man to serve the State." His first letter to Lady Nelson was written under the same opinion, but in a more cheerful strain. "It was the chance of war," said he, "and I have great reason to be thankful. I shall not be surprised if I am neglected and forgotten; probably I shall no longer be considered as useful; however, I shall feel rich if I continue to enjoy your affection. I beg neither you nor my father will think much of this mishap; my mind has long been made up to such an event."

Honours enough to heal his wounded spirit awaited him in England. Letters were addressed to him by the

First Lord of the Admiralty, and by his steady friend, the Duke of Clarence, to congratulate him on his return, covered as he was with glory. He assured the Duke, in his reply, that not a scrap of that ardour, with which he had hitherto served his King, had been shot away. The freedoms of the cities of Bristol and London were transmitted to him. He was invested with the Order of the Bath, and received a pension of £1,000 a year.

His sufferings from the lost limb were long and painful. A nerve had been taken up in one of the ligatures, at the time of the operation; and the ligature, according to the practice of the French surgeons, was of silk, instead of waxed thread; this produced a constant irritation and discharge; and the ends of the ligature being pulled every day, in hopes of bringing it away, occasioned fresh agony. He had scarcely any intermission of pain, day or night, for three months after his return to England. Lady Nelson, at his earnest request, attended the dressing of his arm, till she had acquired sufficient resolution and skill to dress it herself. One night, during this state of suffering, after a day of constant pain, Nelson retired early to bed, in hope of enjoying some respite by means of laudanum. He was at that time lodging in Bond Street; and the family were soon disturbed by a mob knocking loudly and violently at the door. The news of Duncan's victory had been made public, and the house was not illuminated. But when the mob were told that Admiral Nelson lay there in bed, badly wounded, the foremost of them made answer: "You shall hear no more from us to-night": and in fact, the feeling of respect and sympathy was communicated from one to another with such effect, that, under the confusion of such a night, the house was not molested again.

About the end of November, after a night of sound sleep, he found the arm nearly free from pain: the surgeon was immediately sent for to examine it; and the ligature came away with the slightest touch. From that time it began to heal. As soon as he thought his health established, he sent the following form of thanksgiving to the minister of St. George's, Hanover Square:—"An officer desires to return thanks to Almighty God for his perfect recovery from a severe wound, and also for the many mercies bestowed on him."

Not having been in England till now, since he lost his eye, he went to receive a year's pay as smart money; but could not obtain payment, because he had neglected to bring a certificate from a surgeon, that the sight was actually destroyed. A little irritated that this form should be insisted upon, because, though the fact was not apparent, he thought it was sufficiently notorious, he procured a certificate, at the same time, for the loss of his arm; saying, they might just as well doubt one as the other. This put him in good humour with himself, and with the clerk who had offended him. On his return to the office, the clerk finding it was only the annual pay of a captain, observed, he thought it had been more. "Oh," replied Nelson, "this is only for an eye. In a few days I shall come for an arm; and in a little time longer, God knows, most probably for a leg." Accordingly he soon afterwards went; and with perfect good humour exhibited the certificate of the loss of his arm.

CHAPTER V

Nelson rejoins Earl St. Vincent in the *Vanguard*—Sails in pursuit of the French to Egypt—Returns to Sicily, and sails again to Egypt—Battle of the Nile.

EARLY in the year 1798, Sir Horatio Nelson hoisted his flag in the *Vanguard* and was ordered to rejoin Earl St. Vincent. Upon his departure, his father addressed him with that affectionate solemnity by which all his letters were distinguished. "I trust in the Lord," said he, "that he will prosper your going out and your coming in. I earnestly desired once more to see you, and that wish has been heard. If I should presume to say, I hope to see you again, the question would be readily asked, 'How old art thou?' *Vale! vale! Domine, vale!*"

Immediately on his rejoining the fleet, he was dispatched to the Mediterranean with a small squadron, in order to ascertain, if possible, the object of the great expedition which at that time was fitting out, under Buonaparte, at Toulon. The defeat of this armament, whatever might be its destination, was deemed by the British Government an object paramount to every other; and Earl St. Vincent was directed, if he thought it necessary to take his whole force into the Mediterranean, to relinquish, for that purpose, the blockade of the Spanish fleet, as a thing of inferior moment; but, if he should deem a detachment sufficient, "I think it almost unnecessary," said the First Lord of the Admiralty, in his secret instructions, "to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under Sir Horatio Nelson." It is to the honour of Earl St. Vincent, that he had already made the same choice.

The armament at Toulon consisted of thirteen ships of the line, seven 40-gun frigates, with twenty-four smaller vessels of war, and nearly two hundred transports. Mr. Udney, our consul at Leghorn, was the first person who procured certain intelligence of the enemy's design against Malta; and from his own sagacity, foresaw that Egypt must be their after object. Nelson sailed from Gibraltar, on the 9th of May, to watch this formidable armament. On the 19th, when they were in the Gulf of Lyons, a gale came on from the N. W. It moderated on the 20th. After dark, it again began to blow strong: but the ships had been prepared for a gale, and therefore Nelson's mind was easy. The night was so tempestuous, that it was impossible for any signal either to be seen or heard; and Nelson determined, as soon as it should be daybreak, to wear, and scud before the gale: but at half-past three the fore-mast went in three pieces, and the bowsprit was found to be sprung in three places. When day broke, they succeeded in wearing the ship with a remnant of the spritsail; this was hardly to have been expected: the *Vanguard* was at that time twenty-five leagues south of the island of Hières, with her head lying to the N.E. and if she had not wore, the ship must have drifted to Corsica. Captain Ball, in the *Alexander*, took her in tow, to carry her into the Sardinian harbour of St. Pietro. Nelson, apprehensive that this attempt might endanger both vessels, ordered him to cast off: but that excellent officer, with a spirit like his commander's, replied, he was confident he could save the *Vanguard*, and by God's help he would do it. "I ought not," said the Admiral, writing to his wife—"I ought not to call what has happened to the *Vanguard* by the cold name of accident: I believe firmly it was the Almighty's goodness, to

check my consummate vanity. I hope it has made me a better officer, as I feel confident it has made me a better man."

Nelson had, indeed, more reason to refuse the cold name of accident to this tempest, than he was then aware of; for on that very day the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and must have passed within a few leagues of his little squadron, which was thus preserved by the thick weather that came on.

The British Government at this time, with a becoming spirit, gave orders that any port in the Mediterranean should be considered as hostile, where the Governor, or chief magistrate, should refuse to let our ships of war procure supplies of provisions, or of any article which they might require.

In these orders the ports of Sardinia were excepted. Nelson was informed, that he could not be permitted to enter the port of St. Pietro. Regardless of this interdict, which, under his circumstances, it would have been an act of suicidal folly to have regarded, he anchored in the harbour; and, by the exertions of Sir James Saumarez, Capt. Ball, and Capt. Berry, the *Vanguard* was refitted in four days; months would have been employed in refitting her in England.

The delay which was thus occasioned was useful to him in many respects: it enabled him to complete his supply of water, and to receive a reinforcement which Earl St. Vincent, being himself reinforced from England, was enabled to send him. As soon as the reinforcement was seen from the mast-head of the Admiral's ship, off Cadiz Bay, signal was immediately made to Captain Troubridge to put to sea; and he was out of sight before the ships from home cast anchor in the British station. Troubridge took with him no instructions to Nelson as

to the course he was to steer, nor any certain account of the enemy's destination: everything was left to his own judgment. Unfortunately, the frigates had been separated from him in the tempest, and had not been able to rejoin: they sought him unsuccessfully in the Bay of Naples, where they obtained no tidings of his course; and he sailed without them.

The first news of the enemy's armament was, that it had surprised Malta. Nelson formed a plan for attacking it while at anchor at Gozo; but on the 22nd of June intelligence reached him that the French had left that island on the 16th; the day after their arrival. It was clear that their destination was eastward—he thought for Egypt—and for Egypt therefore, he made all sail. Had the frigates been with him he could scarcely have failed to gain information of the enemy: for want of them, he only spoke three vessels on the way and neither of them had seen anything of the French. He arrived off Alexandria on the 28th, and the enemy were not there, neither was there any account of them; but the Governor was endeavouring to put the city in a state of defence, having received advice from Leghorn, that the French expedition was intended against Egypt, after it had taken Malta. Nelson then shaped his course to the northward, for Caramania, and steered from thence along the southern side of Candia, carrying a press of sail, both night and day, with a contrary wind.

Baffled in his pursuit, he returned to Sicily. The Neapolitan Ministry had determined to give his squadron no assistance, being resolved to do nothing which could possibly endanger their peace with the French Directory. By means, however, of Lady Hamilton's influence at Court, he procured secret orders to the Sicilian Governors; and, under those orders obtained everything which

he wanted at Syracuse—a timely supply, without which, he always said, he could not have recommenced his pursuit with any hope of success. Vexed, however, and disappointed as he was, Nelson, with the true spirit of a hero, was still full of hope. "Thanks to your exertions," said he, writing to Sir William and Lady Hamilton, "we have victualled and watered: and surely, watering at the fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze; and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel, or covered with cypress." Earl St. Vincent he assured, that if the French were above water he would find them out. He still held his opinion that they were bound for Egypt; "but," said he to the First Lord of the Admiralty, "be they bound to the Antipodes, your lordship may rely that I will not lose a moment in bringing them to action."

On the 25th of July he sailed from Syracuse for the Morea. Anxious beyond measure, and irritated that the enemy should so long have eluded him, the tediousness of the nights made him impatient; and the officer of the watch was repeatedly called on to let him know the hour, and convince him, who measured time by his own eagerness, that it was not yet daybreak. The squadron made the Gulf of Coron on the 28th. Troubridge entered the port, and returned with intelligence that the French had been seen about four weeks before steering to the S.E. from Candia. Nelson then determined immediately to return to Alexandria; and the British fleet accordingly, with every sail set, stood once more for the coast of Egypt. On the 1st of August, about ten in the morning, they came in sight of Alexandria; the port had been vacant and solitary when they saw it last; it was now crowded with ships, and they

perceived with exultation that the tricoloured flag was flying upon the walls. At four in the afternoon, Captain Hood, in the *Zealous* made the signal for the enemy's fleet. For many preceding days Nelson had hardly taken either sleep or food. He now ordered his dinner to be served, while preparations were making for battle; and when his officers rose from table, and went to their separate stations, he said to them, "Before this time to-morrow I shall have gained a peerage, or Westminster Abbey."

Why Buonaparte, having effected his landing, should not have suffered the fleet to return, has never yet been explained. Thus much is certain, that it was detained by his command. The French fleet arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July; and Brueys, not being able to enter the port, which time and neglect had ruined, moored his ships in Aboukir Bay, in a strong and compact line of battle; the headmost vessel, according to his own account, being as close as possible to a shoal on the N. W., and the rest of the fleet forming a kind of curve along the line of deep water, so as not to be turned by any means in the S.W. By Buonaparte's desire he had offered a reward of 10,000 livres to any pilot of the country who would carry the squadron in; but none could be found who would venture to take charge of a single vessel drawing more than twenty feet. He had therefore made the best of his situation, and chosen the strongest position which he could possibly take in an open road. The advantage in numbers, both in ships, guns, and men, was in favour of the French.

During the whole pursuit, it had been Nelson's practice, whenever circumstances would permit, to have his Captains on board the *Vanguard* and explain to them his own ideas of the different and best modes of

attack, and such plans as he proposed to execute on falling in with the enemy, whatever their situation might be. There is no possible position, it is said, which he did not take into calculation. His officers were thus fully acquainted with his principles of tactics; and such was his confidence in their abilities, that the only thing determined upon, in case they should find the French at anchor, was for the ships to form as most convenient for their mutual support, and to anchor by the stern. "First gain the victory," he said, "and then make the best use of it you can." The moment he perceived the position of the French, that intuitive genius with which Nelson was endowed displayed itself; and it instantly struck him, that where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing, there was room for one of ours to anchor. The plan which he intended to pursue, therefore, was to keep entirely on the outer side of the French line. Captain Berry, when he comprehended the scope of the design, exclaimed with transport, "If we succeed, what will the world say!" "There is no *if* in the case," replied the Admiral: "that we shall succeed is certain: who may live to tell the story is a very different question."

As the squadron advanced, they were assailed by a shower of shot and shell from the batteries on the island, and the enemy opened a steady fire from the starboard side of their whole line full into the bows of our van ships. It was received in silence.

A French brig was instructed to decoy the English, so as to tempt them toward a shoal lying off the island of Bekier; but Nelson either knew the danger, or suspected some deceit, and the lure was unsuccessful. Captain Foley led the way in the *Goliath*, outsailing the *Zealous*, which for some minutes disputed this post of

honour with him. Intending to fix himself on the inner bow of the *Guerrier*, he kept as near the edge of the bank as the depth of water would admit; but his anchor hung, and having opened his fire, he drifted to the second ship, the *Conquérant*, before it was clear; then anchored by the stern, inside of her, and in ten minutes shot away her mast. Hood, in the *Zealous*, perceiving this, took the station which the *Goliath* intended to have occupied, and totally disabled the *Guerrier* in twelve minutes. The third ship which doubled the enemy's van was the *Orion;* she passed to windward of the *Zealous*, and opened her larboard guns as long as they bore on the *Guerrier;* then passing inside the *Goliath*, sunk a frigate which annoyed her, hauled round toward the French line, and anchoring inside, between the fifth and sixth ships, took her station on the larboard bow of the *Franklin*, and the quarter of the *Peuple Souverain*, receiving and returning the fire of both. The sun was now nearly down. The *Audacious*, pouring a heavy fire into the *Guerrier* and the *Conquérant*, fixed herself on the larboard bow of the latter, and when that ship struck passed on to the *Peuple Souverain*. The *Theseus* followed, brought down the *Guerrier's* remaining main and mizen-masts, then anchored inside of the *Spartiate*, the third in the French line.

While these advanced ships doubled the French line, the *Vanguard* was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy. Nelson had six colours flying in different parts of his rigging, lest they should be shot away—that they should be struck, no British Admiral considers as a possibility. He veered half a cable, and instantly opened a tremendous fire, under cover of which the other four ships of his division, the *Minotaur*, *Bellerophon*, *Defence*, and *Majestic*, sailed on ahead of the

Admiral. In a few minutes, every man stationed at the first six guns in the forepart of the *Vanguard's* deck was killed or wounded; these guns were three times cleared. Captain Louis, in the *Minotaur*, anchored just ahead, and took off the fire of the *Aquilon*, the fourth in the enemy's line. The *Bellerophon* passed ahead, and dropped her stern anchor on the starboard bow of the *Orient*, Brueys' own ship, of 120 guns, whose difference of force was in proportion of more than seven to three, and whose weight of ball, from the lower deck alone, exceeded that from the whole broadside of the *Bellerophon*. Captain Peyton, in the *Defence*, took his station ahead of the *Minotaur*, and engaged the *Franklin*, the sixth in the line; by which judicious movement the British line remained unbroken. The *Majestic*, Captain Westcott, got entangled with the main rigging of one of the French ships astern of the *Orient*, and suffered dreadfully from that three-decker's fire; but she swung clear, and closely engaging the *Heureux*, received also the fire of the *Tonnant*. The other four ships of the British Squadron, having been detached previous to the discovery of the French, were at a considerable distance when the action began. It commenced at half after six; about seven, night closed, and there was no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets.

Troubridge in the *Culloden*, then foremost of the remaining ships, was two leagues astern. He came on sounding, as the others had done; as he advanced, the increasing darkness increased the difficulty of the navigation; and suddenly, after having found eleven fathoms water, he was fast aground; nor could all his own exertions get him off in time to bear a part in the action. His ship, however, served as a beacon to the *Alexander*

and *Swiftsure*, which would else, from the course which they were holding, have gone considerably farther on the reef, and must inevitably have been lost. These ships entered the bay, and took their stations, in the darkness. Captain Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, as he was bearing down, fell in with what seemed to be a strange sail; Nelson had directed his ships to hoist four lights horizontally at the mizen peak, as soon as it became dark, and this vessel had no such distinction. Hallowell, however, with great judgment, ordered his men not to fire: if she was an enemy, he said, she was in too disabled a state to escape; but, from her sails being loose, and the way in which her head was, it was probably she might be an English ship. It was the *Bellerophon*, overpowered by the huge *Orient*; her lights had gone overboard, nearly two hundred of her crew were killed or wounded, all her masts and cables had been shot away, and she was drifting out of the line, toward the leeside of the bay. Her station, at this important time, was occupied by the *Swiftsure*, which opened a steady fire on the quarter of the *Franklin* and the bows of the French Admiral. At the same instant Captain Ball, with the *Alexander*, passed under his stern, and anchored within side on his larboard quarter, raking him, and keeping up a severe fire of musketry upon his decks. The last ship which arrived to complete the destruction of the enemy was the *Leander*. Captain Thompson, finding that nothing could be done that night to get off the *Culloden*, advanced with the intention of anchoring athwart-hawse of the *Orient*. The *Franklin* was so near her ahead, that there was not room for him to pass clear of the two; he therefore took his station athwart-hawse of the latter, in such a position as to rake both.

The two first ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action; and the others had in that time suffered so severely, that victory was already certain. Then third, fourth, and fifth, were taken possession of at half-past eight. Meantime Nelson received a severe wound on the head. Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal. Nelson himself thought so. A large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye; and the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cockpit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors—with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands, that he might instantly attend the Admiral. "No," said Nelson; "I will take my turn with my brave fellows." Nor would he suffer his own wound to be examined till every man who had been previously wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the Chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson. He then sent for Captain Louis on board from the *Minotaur*, that he might thank him personally for the great assistance which he had rendered to the *Vanguard* and ever mindful of those who deserved to be his friends, appointed Captain Hardy to the command of his own ship, Captain Berry having to go home with the news of the victory. When the surgeon came in due time to examine his wound (for it was vain to entreat

him to let it be examined sooner), the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men, and of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was merely superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The Surgeon requested, and, as far as he could, ordered him to remain quiet; but Nelson could not rest. He called for his Secretary, Mr. Campbell, to write the dispatches. Campbell had himself been wounded; and was so affected at the blind and suffering state of the Admiral, that he was unable to write. The Chaplain was then sent for; but before he came, Nelson, with his characteristic eagerness, took the pen, and contrived to trace a few words, marking his devout sense of the success, which had already been obtained. He was now left alone; when suddenly a cry was heard on the deck, that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave orders that boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy.

It was soon after nine that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys was dead: he had received three wounds, yet would not leave his post; a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried below, but to be left to die upon deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. Her sides had just been painted; and the oil-jars and paint-buckets were lying on the poop. By the prodigious light of this conflagration, the situation of the two fleets could now be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguishable. About ten o'clock the ship blew up, with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel. Many of her officers and men jumped overboard, some clinging to the spars and

pieces of wreck with which the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momently dreaded. Some were picked up by our boats; and some, even in the heat and fury of the action, were dragged into the lower ports of the nearest British ships by the British sailors. The greater part of her crew, however, stood the danger to the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful. The firing immediately ceased on both sides; and the first sound which broke the silence, was the dash of her shattered masts and yards, falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been exploded. It is upon record that a battle between two armies was once broken off by an earthquake. Such an event would be felt like a miracle; but no incident in war, produced by human means, has ever equalled the sublimity of this co-instantaneous pause, and all its circumstances.

About seventy of the *Orient's* crew were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished were the Commodore, Casabianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old. They were seen floating on a shattered mast when the ship blew up. She had money on board (the plunder of Malta) to the amount of £600,000 sterling. The masses of burning wreck, which were scattered by the explosion, excited for some moments apprehensions in the English which they had never felt from any other danger. Capt. Ball had provided, as far as human foresight could provide, against any such danger. All the shrouds and sails of his ship, not absolutely necessary for its immediate management, were thoroughly wetted, and so rolled up, that they were as hard and as little inflammable as so many solid cylinders.

The firing recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, and continued till about three. At daybreak, the *Guillaume Tell* and the *Généreux*, the two rear ships of the enemy, were the only French ships of the line which had their colours flying; they cut their cables in the forenoon, not having been engaged. and stood out to sea, and two frigates with them. The *Zealous* pursued; but as there was no other ship in a condition to support Capt. Hood, he was recalled. It was generally believed by the officers, that if Nelson had not been wounded, not one of these ships could have escaped; the four certainly could not, if the *Culloden* had got into action; and if the frigates belonging to the squadron had been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have left Aboukir Bay. These four vessels, how ever, were all that escaped; and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history. "Victory," said Nelson, "is not a name strong enough for such a scene" ; he called it a conquest.

The victory was complete; but Nelson could not pursue it as he would have done, for want of means. Had he been provided with small craft, nothing could have prevented the destruction of the storeships and transports in the port of Alexandria; four bomb-vessels would at that time have burned the whole in a few hours. "Were I to die this moment," said he in his despatches to the Admiralty, "*want of frigates* would be found stamped on my heart! No words of mine can express what I have suffered, and am suffering, for want of them." He had also to bear up against great bodily suffering: the blow had so shaken his head, that from its constant and violent aching, and the perpetual sickness which accompanied the pain, he could scarcely persuade himself that the skull was not fractured. But, amidst

his sufferings and exertions, Nelson could yet think of all the consequences of his victory; and that no advantage from it might be lost, he despatched an officer over land to India, with letters to the Governor of Bombay, informing him of the arrival of the French in Egypt, the total destruction of their fleet, and the consequent preservation of India from any attempt against it on the part of this formidable armament. "He knew that Bombay," he said, "was their first object, if they could get there; but he trusted that Almighty God would overthrow in Egypt these pests of the human race. Buonaparte had never yet had to contend with an English officer, and he would endeavour to make him respect us." This despatch he sent upon his own responsibility, with letters of credit upon the East India Company, addressed to the British consuls, vice-consuls, and merchants on his route.

Nelson was now at the summit of glory: congratulations, rewards, and honours, were showered upon him by all the States, and princes, and powers to whom his victory gave a respite. The first communication of this nature which he received was from the Turkish Sultan who presented him with a pelisse of sables, with broad sleeves, valued at five thousand dollars; and a diamond aigrette, valued at eighteen thousand: the most honourable badge among the Turks; and in this instance more especially honourable, because it was taken from one of the royal turbans. The Sultan also sent a purse of two thousand sequins, to be distributed among the wounded. The mother of the Sultan sent him a box, set with diamonds, valued at one thousand pounds. The Czar Paul presented him with his portrait, set in diamonds, in a gold box, accompanied with a letter of congratulation, written by his own hand. The King of Sardinia also

wrote to him, and sent a gold box, set with diamonds. Honours in profusion were awaiting him at Naples. In his own country the King granted him several honourable augmentations to his armorial ensign. He was created Baron Nelson of the Nile, and of Burnham Thorpe, with a pension of £2,000 for his own life, and those of his two immediate successors. When the grant was moved in the House of Commons, General Walpole expressed an opinion, that a higher degree of rank ought to be conferred. Mr. Pitt made answer, that he thought it needless to enter into that question. "Admiral Nelson's fame," he said, "would be coëqual with the British name; and it would be remembered that he had obtained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man would think of asking, whether he had been created a baron, a viscount, or an earl." True, indeed, whatever title had been bestowed, whether viscount, earl, marquis, duke, or prince, if our laws had so permitted, he who received it would have been Nelson still. That name he had ennobled beyond all addition of nobility: it was the name by which England loved him, France feared him, Italy, Egypt, and Turkey celebrated him: and by which he will continue to be known while the present kingdoms and languages of the world endure, and as long as their history after them shall be held in remembrance.

CHAPTER VI

Nelson returns to Naples—State of that Court and Kingdom—General Mack—The French approach Naples—Flight of the Royal Family—Successes of the Allies in Italy—Transactions in the Bay of Naples—Expulsion of the French from the Neapolitan and Roman States—Nelson is made Duke of Bronte—He leaves the Mediterranean and returns to England.

NELSON'S health had suffered greatly during all this time. The anxiety which he endured during his long pursuit of the enemy was rather changed in its direction, than abated by their defeat; and this constant wakefulness of thought, added to the effect of his wound, and the exertions from which it was not possible for one of so ardent and wide-reaching a mind to spare himself, nearly proved fatal. On his way back to Italy he was seized with fever. For eighteen hours his life was despaired of; and even when the disorder took a favourable turn, and he was so far recovered as again to appear on deck, he himself thought that his end was approaching—such was the weakness to which the fever and cough had reduced him.

The kindest attentions of the warmest friendship were awaiting him at Naples. "Come here," said Sir William Hamilton, "for God's sake, my dear friend, as soon as the service will permit you. A pleasant apartment is ready for you in my house, and Emma is looking out for the softest pillows to repose the few wearied limbs you have left." Happy would it have been for Nelson if warm and careful friendship had been all that awaited him there! He himself saw at that time the character of the Neapolitan Court, as it first struck an Englishman, in its true light: and when he was on the way he declared that he detested the voyage to Naples, and that nothing

but necessity could have forced him to it. But never was any hero, on his return from victory, welcomed with more heartfelt joy. Before the battle of Aboukir the Court of Naples had been trembling for its existence. The joy, therefore, of the Court at Nelson's success was in proportion to dismay from which that success relieved them.

Early on the 22nd of September, the poor wretched *Vanguard*, as he called his shattered vessel, appeared in sight of Naples. The *Culloden* and *Alexander* had preceded her by some days, and given notice of her approach. Many hundred boats and barges were ready to go forth and meet him, with music and streamers, and every demonstration of joy and triumph. Sir William and Lady Hamilton led the way in their state barge; and when their barge came alongside the *Vanguard*, at the sight of Nelson Lady Hamilton sprang up the ship's side, and exclaiming, "O God! is it possible!" fell into his arms, more, he says, like one dead than alive. He described the meeting as "terribly affecting." These friends had scarcely recovered from their tears, when the King, who went out to meet him three leagues in the royal barge, came on board and took him by the hand, calling him his deliverer and preserver. From all the boats around he was saluted with the same appellations; and the multitude who surrounded him when he landed repeated the same enthusiastic cries.

His birthday, which occurred a week after his arrival, was celebrated with one of the most splendid fêtes ever beheld at Naples. But, notwithstanding the splendour with which he was encircled, and the flattering honours with which all ranks welcomed him, Nelson was fully sensible of the depravity, as well as weakness, of those by whom he was surrounded.

The battle of the Nile shook the power of France. Her most successful General and her finest army were blocked up in Egypt—hopeless, as it appeared, of return; and the government was in the hands of men without talents, without character, and divided among themselves. Austria, whom Buonaparte had terrified into a peace, at a time when constancy on her part would probably have led to his destruction, took advantage of the crisis to renew the war. Russia also was preparing to enter the field with unbroken forces. Naples, seeing its destruction at hand, and thinking that the only means of averting it was by meeting the danger, after long vacillations, which were produced by the fears, and weakness, and treachery of its council, agreed at last to join this new coalition with a numerical force of eighty thousand men.

His first object was the recovery of Malta; an island which the King of Naples pretended to claim. The Maltese, whom the villainous knights of their order had betrayed to France, had taken up arms against their rapacious invaders, with a spirit and unanimity worthy of the highest praise. They blockaded the French garrison by land, and a small squadron, under Captain Ball, began to blockade them by sea, on the 12th of October. Twelve days afterwards Nelson arrived. The little island of Gozo, dependent upon Malta, which had also been seized and garrisoned by the French, capitulated soon after his arrival, and was taken possession of by the British, in the name of his Sicilian Majesty. Having seen this effected, and reinforced Captain Ball, he left that able officer to perform a most arduous and important part, and returned himself to co-operate with the intended movements of the Neapolitans.

General Mack, at the head of thirty-two thousand Neapolitan troops, marched into the Roman States, while

five thousand Neapolitans were embarked on board the British and Portuguese squadron, to take possession of Leghorn. This was effected without opposition.

The King of Naples was with the army which had entered Rome; but the castle of St. Angelo was held by the French, and thirteen thousand French were strongly posted in the Roman States at Castallana. Mack had marched against them with twenty thousand men. Nelson saw that the event was doubtful; or rather that there could be very little hope of the result. But the immediate fate of Naples, as he well knew, hung upon the issue. "If Mack is defeated," said he, "in fourteen days this country is lost; for the Emperor has not yet moved his army, and Naples has not the power of resisting the enemy." He had no reliance upon the Neapolitan officers; who, as he described them, seemed frightened at a drawn sword or a loaded gun; and he was perfectly aware of the consequences which the sluggish movements and deceitful policy of the Austrians were likely to bring down upon themselves, and all their continental allies.

His fears were soon verified. "The Neapolitan officers," said Nelson, "did not lose much honour, for, God knows, they had not much to lose; but they lost all they had." General St. Philip commanded the right wing, of nineteen thousand men. He fell in with three thousand of the enemy; and, as soon as he came near enough, deserted to them. One of his men had virtue enough to level a musket at him, and shot him through the arm; but the wound was not sufficient to prevent him from joining with the French in pursuit of his own countrymen. Cannon, tents, baggage, and military chests, were all forsaken by the runaways, though they lost only forty men: for the French having put them to

flight, and got possession of everything, did not pursue an army of more than three times their own number. The main body of the Neapolitans, under Mack, did not behave better. The King returned to Naples, where every day brought with it the tidings of some new disgrace from the army, and the discovery of some new treachery at home; till, four days after his return, the General sent him advice, that there was no prospect of stopping the progress of the enemy, and that the royal family must look to their own personal safety.

On the night of the 21st (December), at half-past eight, Nelson landed, brought out the whole royal family, embarked them in three barges, and carried them safely, through a tremendous sea, to the *Vanguard*. Notice was then immediately given to the British merchants, that they would be received on board any ship in the squadron. Their property had previously been embarked in transports. Two days were passed in the bay, for the purpose of taking such persons on board as required an asylum; and, on the night of the 23rd, the fleet sailed. The next day a more violent storm arose than Nelson had ever before encountered. On the 25th, the youngest of the princes was taken ill, and died in Lady Hamilton's arms. During this whole trying season, Lady Hamilton waited upon the royal family with the zeal of the most devoted servant, at a time when, except one man, no person belonging to the Court assisted them.

On the morning of the 26th, the royal family were landed at Palermo. It was soon seen that their flight had not been premature.

The King of Sardinia, finding it impossible longer to endure the exactions of France, and the insults of the French Commissary, went to Leghorn, embarked on board a Danish frigate, and sailed, under British

protection, to Sardinia. Tuscany was soon occupied by French troops: a fate which bolder policy might, perhaps, have failed to avert, but which its weak and timid neutrality rendered inevitable. Nelson began to fear even for Sicily.* "Oh, my dear sir," said he, writing to Commodore Duckworth, "one thousand English troops would save Messina, and I fear General Stuart cannot give me men to save this most important island!" But his representations were not lost upon Sir Charles Stuart: this officer hastened immediately from Minorca, with a thousand men, assisted in the measures of defence which were taken, and did not return before he had satisfied himself that Sicily was safe.

Russia had now entered into the war. Corfu surrendered to a Russian and Turkish fleet, acting now, for the first time, in strange confederacy. Troubridge having given up the blockade of Alexandria to Sir Sidney Smith, joined Nelson, bringing with him a considerable addition of strength. Troubridge was entrusted to commence the operations against the French in the Bay of Naples: meantime Cardinal Ruffo, a man of questionable character, but of a temper fitted for such times, having landed in Calabria, raised what he called a Christian army, composed of the best and the vilest materials. The islands in the Bay of Naples were joyfully delivered up by the inhabitants, who were in a state of famine already, from the effect of this baleful revolution.

...

Nelson's heart too was at this time ashore. "To tell you," he says, writing to Lady Hamilton, "how dreary and uncomfortable the *Vanguard* appears, is only telling you what it is to go from the pleasantest society to a solitary cell; or from the dearest friends to no friends. I am now perfectly the great man—not a

creature near me. From my heart I wish myself the little man, again. You and good Sir William have spoiled me for any place, but with you."

His mind was not in a happier state respecting public affairs. "As to politics," said he, "at this time they are my abomination: the ministers of kings and princes are as great scoundrels as ever lived." Nelson perceived selfishness and knavery wherever he looked; and even the pleasure of seeing a cause prosper, in which he was so zealously engaged, was poisoned by his sense of the rascality of those with whom he was compelled to act.

At this juncture intelligence arrived (May 12th) that the French fleet had escaped from Brest, under cover of a fog, passed Cadiz unseen by Lord Keith's squadron, in hazy weather, and entered the Mediterranean. It was said to consist of twenty-four sail of the line, six frigates, and three sloops. The object of the French was to liberate the Spanish fleet, form a junction with them, act against Minorca and Sicily, and overpower our naval force in the Mediterranean, by falling in with detached squadrons, and thus destroying it in detail. When they arrived off Carthagena, they requested the Spanish ships to make sail and join; but the Spaniards replied, they had not men to man them. To this it was answered that the French had men enough on board for that purpose. But the Spaniards seem to have been apprehensive of delivering up their ships thus entirely into the power of such allies, and refused to come out. The fleet from Cadiz, however, consisting of from seventeen to twenty sail of the line, got out, under Masaredo. They met with a violent storm off the coast of Oran, which dismasted many of their ships, and so effectually disabled them, as to prevent the junction, and frustrate a well-planned expedition.

Before this occurred, and while the junction was as probable as it would have been formidable, Nelson was in a state of the greatest anxiety. "What a state am I in!" said he to Earl St. Vincent. "If I go I risk, and more than risk, Sicily; for we know, from experience, that more depends upon opinion than upon acts themselves; and as I stay my heart is breaking." His first business was to summon Troubridge to join him with all the ships of the line under his command, and a frigate, if possible. Then hearing that the French had entered the Mediterranean, and expecting them at Palermo, where he had only his own ship—with that single ship he prepared to make all the resistance possible. Troubridge having joined him, he left Captain E. J. Foote, of the *Seahorse*, to command the smaller vessels in the Bay of Naples, and sailed with six ships, telling Earl St. Vincent that the squadron should never fall into the hands of the enemy: "And before we are destroyed," said he, "I have little doubt but they will have their wings so completely clipped, that they may be easily overtaken."

While he sailed from Palermo (May 20th), with the intention of collecting his whole force, and keeping off Maretimo, either to receive reinforcement there, if the Fench were bound upwards, or to hasten to Minorca, if that should be their destination, Captain Foote, in the *Seahorse*, with the Neapolitan frigates, and some small vessels, under his command, was left to act with a land force consisting of a few regular troops, of four different nations, and with the armed rabble which Cardinal Ruffo called the Christian army. Ruffo advancing without any plan, but relying upon the enemy's want of numbers and ready to take advantage of any accident which might occur, approached Naples. Fort St. Elmo, which

commands the town, was wholly garrisoned by the French troops; the castles of Uovo and Nuovo, which commanded the anchorage, were chiefly defended by Neapolitan revolutionists, the powerful men among them having taken shelter there. If these castles were taken, the reduction of Fort St. Elmo would be greatly expedited. Ruffo proposed to the garrison to capitulate, on condition that their persons and property should be guaranteed, and that they should, at their own option, either be sent to Toulon, or remain at Naples, without being molested either in their persons or families. This capitulation was accepted. About six-and-thirty hours afterwards, Nelson arrived in the bay with a force which had joined him during his cruise, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, with seventeen hundred troops on board. and the Prince Royal of Naples in the Admiral's ship. A flag of truce was flying on the castles, and on board the *Seahorse.* Nelson made a signal to annual the treaty; declaring that he would grant rebels no other terms than those of unconditional submission. The Cardinal objected to this; nor could all the arguments of Nelson, Sir W. Hamilton, and Lady Hamilton, who took an active part in the conference, convince him that a treaty of such a nature, solemnly concluded, could honourably be set aside. He retired at last, silenced by Nelson's authority, but not convinced. Captain Foote was sent out of the bay; and the garrisons, taken out of the castles under pretence of carrying the treaty into effect, were delivered over as rebels to the vengeance of the Sicilian Court.

The castles of St. Elmo, Gaieta, and Capua, remained to be subdued. On the land side there was no danger that the French in these garrisons should be relieved, for Suvarof (or Suwarrow) was now beginning to drive the enemy before him; but Nelson thought his

presence necessary in the Bay of Naples: and when Lord Keith, having received intelligence that the French and Spanish fleets had formed a junction, and sailed for Carthagena, ordered him to repair to Minorca, with the whole or the greater part of his force, he sent Admiral Duckworth with a small part only.

Nelson was right in his judgment: no attempt was made upon Minorca: and the expulsion of the French from Naples may rather be said to have been effected, than accelerated, by the English and Portuguese of the allied fleet, acting upon shore, under Troubridge.

The whole kingdom of Naples was thus delivered by Nelson from the French. The Admiralty, however, thought it expedient to censure him for disobeying Lord Keith's orders, and thus hazarding Minorca, without, as it appeared to them, any sufficient reason. This reprimand was issued before the event was known; though, indeed, the event would not affect the principle upon which it proceeded.

In expelling the French from Naples, Nelson had, with characteristic zeal and ability, discharged his duty; but he deceived himself when he imagined that he had seated Ferdinand firmly on his throne, and that he had restored happiness to millions. These objects might have been accomplished if it had been possible to inspire virtue and wisdom into a vicious and infatuated Court.

The Sicilian Court, however, were at this time duly sensible of the services which had been rendered them by the British fleet, and their gratitude to Nelson was shown with proper and princely munificence. They gave him the dukedom and domain of Bronte, worth about £3,000 a year. It was some days before he could be persuaded to accept it: the argument which finally prevailed is said to have been suggested by the Queen,

and urged, at her request, by Lady Hamilton upon her knees. "He considered his own honour too much," she said, "if he persisted in refusing what the King and Queen felt to be absolutely necessary for the preservation of theirs." The King himself, also, is said to have addressed him in the following words:—"Lord Nelson, do you wish that your name alone should pass with glory to posterity; and that I, Ferdinand de Bourbon, should appear ungrateful?" He gave him also, when the dukedom was accepted, a diamond-hilted sword, which his father, Charles III of Spain, had given him on his accession to the throne of the Two Sicilies. Nelson said, "The present was magnificent, and worthy of a King," (in a letter to Lady Nelson), and "I am determined on one thing, that the inhabitants shall be the happiest in all his Sicilian Majesty's dominions; but," said he, speaking of these and the other remunerations which were made him for his services, "these presents, rich as they are, do not elevate me; my pride is, that, at Constantinople, from the Grand Signior to the lowest Turk, the name of Nelson is familiar in their mouths; and in this country I am everything which a grateful monarch and people can call me."

Nelson, however, had a pardonable pride in the outward and visible signs of honour, which he had so fairly won. He was fond of his Sicilian title; the signification, perhaps, pleased him;—Duke of Thunder was what in Dahomey would be called a *strong name;* it was to a sailor's taste; and certainly, to no man could it ever be more applicable. But a simple offering, which he received not long afterwards, from the island of Zante, affected him with a deeper and finer feeling. The Greeks of that little community sent him a golden-headed sword and a truncheon, set round with all the diamonds that

the island could furnish, in a single row. They thanked him for having, by his victory, preserved that part of Greece from the horrors of anarchy; and prayed that his exploits might accelerate the day, in which, amidst the glory and peace of thrones, the miseries of the human race would cease. This unexpected tribute touched Nelson to the heart. "No officer," he said, "had ever received from any country a higher acknowledgment of his services."

The French still occupied the Roman States. The people, groaning beneath the French exactions, were ready to join any regular force that should come to their assistance; but they dreaded Cardinal Ruffo's rabble. Nelson perceived that no object was now so essential for the tranquillity of Naples as the recovery of Rome; which in the present state of things, when Suwarrow was driving the French before him, would complete the deliverance of Italy. He applied therefore to Sir James Erskine, who commanded at Minorca, to assist in this great object with twelve hundred men. "The field of glory," said he, "is a large one, and was never more open to any one than at this moment to you. Rome would throw open her gates and receive you as a deliverer; and the Pope would owe his restoration to the Papal chair to an heretic." But Sir James Erskine looked only at the difficulties of the undertaking and therefore he did not feel justified in sending away such a detachment.

What this General thought it imprudent to attempt, Nelson and Troubridge effected without his assistance, by a small detachment from the fleet.

Having thus completed his work upon the continent of Italy, Nelson's whole attention was directed towards Malta; where Captain Ball, with most inadequate means,

was besieging the French garrison. Men, money, food—all things were wanting. The garrison consisted of five thousand troops—the besieging force of five hundred English and Portuguese marines, and about fifteen hundred armed peasants. Long and repeatedly did Nelson solicit troops to effect the reduction of this important place. But the same causes of demurral existed, which prevented British troops from assisting in the expulsion of the French from Rome. Sir James Erskine was expecting General Fox, he could not act without orders; and not having, like Nelson, that lively spring of hope within him, which partakes enough of the nature of faith to work miracles in war, he thought it "evident that unless a respectable land force, in numbers sufficient to undertake the siege of such a garrison, in one of the strongest places of Europe, and supplied with proportionate artillery and stores, were sent against it, no reasonable hope could be entertained of its surrender." Nelson groaned over the spirit of over-reasoning caution, and unreasoning obedience. "My heart," said he, "is almost broken. If the enemy gets supplies in, we may bid adieu to Malta: all the force we can collect would then be of little use against the strongest place in Europe. To say that an officer is never, for any object, to alter his orders, is what I cannot comprehend. The circumstances of this war so often vary, that an officer has almost every moment to consider, What would my superiors direct, did they know what is passing under my nose?" "But, sir," said he, writing to the Duke of Clarence (November 9th), "I find few think as I do. To obey orders is all perfection. To serve my King, and to destroy the French, I consider as the great order of all, from which little ones spring: and if one of these little ones militate against it (for who

can tell exactly at a distance?) I go back, to obey the great order and object, to *down, down* with the damned French villains! Excuse my warmth; but my blood boils at the name of Frenchman!"

At length, General Fox arrived at Minorca (November), and at length permitted Colonel Graham to go to Malta, but with means miserably limited. "What can this mean?" said Nelson when he learned that Colonel Graham was ordered not to incur any expense for stores, or any articles except provisions! "the cause cannot stand still for want of a little money. If nobody will pay it, I will sell Bronte, and the Emperor of Russia's box." And he actually pledged Bronte for £6,600 if there should be any difficulty about paying the bills. The long-delayed expedition was thus at last sent forth: but Troubridge little imagined in what scenes of misery he was to bear his part. He looked to Sicily for supplies: it was the interest, as well as the duty, of the Sicilian Government to use every exertion for furnishing them; and Nelson and the British Ambassador were on the spot to press upon them the necessity of exertion. But, though Nelson saw with what a knavish crew the Sicilian Court was surrounded, he was blind to the vices of the Court itself; and resigning himself wholly to Lady Hamilton's influence, never even suspected the crooked policy which it was remorselessly pursuing. The Maltese and the British in Malta severely felt it. Troubridge repeatedly wrote to him, "My lord, we are dying off fast for want."

Nelson was not, and could not be, insensible to the distress which his friend so earnestly represented. He begged, almost on his knees, he said, small supplies of money and corn, to keep the Maltese from starving. And when the Court granted a small supply, protesting

their poverty, he believed their protestations, and was satisfied with their professions, instead of insisting that the restrictions upon the exportation of corn should be withdrawn. The anxiety, however, which he endured, affected him so deeply that he said it had broken his spirit for ever. Happily all that Troubridge, with so much reason, foreboded, did not come to pass. For Captain Ball, finding it hopeless longer to look for succour, or common humanity, from the deceitful and infatuated Court of Sicily, sent his First Lieutenant to the report of Girgenti, with orders to seize and bring with him to Malta the ships which were there lying laden with corn. These orders were executed to the great delight and advantage of the shipowners and proprietors; the necessity of raising the siege was removed, and Captain Ball waited, in calmness, for the consequences to himself.

Nelson himself, at the beginning of February, sailed for that island. On the way he fell in with a French squadron, bound for its relief. One of the frigates and the line-of-battle ship were taken. This ship was one of those which had escaped from Aboukir. Two frigates, and the *Guillaume Tell* were all that now remained of the fleet which Buonaparte had conducted to Egypt. The *Guillaume Tell* was at this time closely watched in the harbour of La Valette; and shortly afterwards, attempting to make her escape from thence, was taken after an action, in which greater skill was never displayed by British ships, nor greater gallantry by an enemy. Nelson, rejoicing at what he called this glorious finish to the whole French Mediterranean fleet, rejoiced also that he was not present to have taken a sprig of these brave men's laurels. "They are," said he (to Lord Keith), "and I glory in them, my darling

children, served in my school; and all of us caught our professional zeal and fire from the great and good Earl of St. Vincent. What a pleasure, what happiness, to have the Nile fleet all taken, under my orders and regulations!"

Letters were found on board the *Guillaume Tell* showing that the French were now become hopeless of preserving the conquest which they had so foully acquired. Troubridge and his brother officers were anxious that Nelson should have the honour of signing the capitulation. They told him, that they absolutely, as far as they dared, insisted on his staying to do this; but their earnest and affectionate entreaties were vain. Sir William Hamilton had just been superseded: Nelson had no feeling of cordiality towards Lord Keith; and thinking that, after Earl St. Vincent, no man had so good a claim to the command in the Mediterranean as himself, he applied for permission to return to England; telling the First Lord of the Admiralty, that his spirit could not submit patiently, and that he was a broken-hearted man.

A ship could not be spared to convey him to England; he therefore travelled through Germany to Hamburg, in company with his inseparable friends, Sir William and Lady Hamilton. The Queen of Naples went with them to Vienna. While they were at Leghorn, upon a report that the French were approaching, the people rose tumultuously, and would fain have persuaded Nelson to lead them against the enemy. Public honours, and yet more gratifying testimonials of public admiration, awaited Nelson wherever he went. The Prince of Esterhazy entertained him in a style of Hungarian magnificence—a hundred grenadiers, each six feet in height, constantly waiting at table. At Magdeburg, the master

of the hotel where he was entertained contrived to show him for money; admitting the curious to mount a ladder, and peep at him through a small window. A wine merchant at Hamburg, who was above seventy years of age, requested to speak with Lady Hamilton, and told her he had some Rhenish wine, of the vintage of 1625, which had been in his own possession more than half a century; he had preserved it for some extraordinary occasion, and that which had now arrived was far beyond any that he could ever have expected. His request was, that her Ladyship would prevail upon Lord Nelson to accept six dozen of this incomparable wines: part of it would then have the honour to flow into the heart's blood of that immortal hero; and this thought would make him happy during the remainder of his life. Nelson, when this singular request was reported to him, went into the room, and taking the worthy old gentleman kindly by the hand, consented to receive six bottles, provided the donor would dine with him next day. Twelve were sent; and Nelson, saying that he hoped yet to win half a dozen more great victories, promised to lay by six bottles of his Hamburg friend's wine, for the purpose of drinking one after each. A German pastor, between seventy and eighty years of age, travelled forty miles, with the Bible of his parish church, to request that Nelson would write his name on the first leaf of it. He called him the saviour of the Christian world.

CHAPTER VII

Nelson separates himself from his wife—Northern Confederacy—He goes to the Baltic, under Sir Hyde Parker—Battle of Copenhagen, and subsequent negotiation—Nelson is made a Viscount.

NELSON was welcomed in England with every mark of popular honour. At Yarmouth, where he landed, every ship in the harbour hoisted her colours. The Mayor and Corporation waited upon him with the freedom of the town, and accompanied him in procession to church, with all the naval officers on shore, and the principal inhabitants. Bonfires and illuminations concluded the day; and, on the morrow, the volunteer cavalry drew up and saluted him as he departed, and followed the carriage to the borders of the county. At Ipswich, the people came out to meet him, drew him a mile into the town, and three miles out. When he was in the *Agamemnon*, he wished to represent this place in Parliament, and some of his friends had consulted the leading men of the Corporation; the result was not successful; and Nelson observing, that he would endeavour to find out a preferable path into Parliament, said there might come a time when the people of Ipswich would think it an honour to have had him for their representative. In London, he was feasted by the City, drawn by the populace from Ludgate-hill to Guildhall, and received the thanks of the Common Council for his great victory, and a golden-hilted sword studded with diamonds. Nelson had every earthly blessing except domestic happiness; he had forfeited that for ever. Before he had been

three months in England he separated from Lady Nelson.

The Addington Administration was just at this time formed; and Nelson, who had solicited employment, and been made Vice-Admiral of the Blue, was sent to the Baltic, as second in command, under Sir Hyde Parker, by Earl St. Vincent, the new First Lord of the Admiralty. The three Northern Courts had formed a confederacy for making England resign her naval rights. Of these courts, Russia was guided by the passions of its Emperor, Paul, a man not without fits of generosity, and some natural goodness, but subject to the wildest humours of caprice, and crazed by the possession of greater power than can ever be safely, or perhaps innocently, possessed by weak humanity. Denmark was French at heart; ready to co-operate in all the views of France, to recognise all her usurpations, and obey all her injunctions. Sweden, under a king whose principles were right, and whose feelings were generous, but who had a taint of hereditary insanity, acted in acquiescence with the dictates of two powers whom it feared to offend.

The Danish navy at this time consisted of twenty-three ships of the line, with about thirty-one frigates and smaller vessels, exclusive of guard ships. The Swedes had eighteen ships of the line, fourteen frigates and sloops, seventy-four galleys and smaller vessels, besides gunboats; and this force was in a far better state of equipment than the Danish. The Russians had eighty-two sail of the line and forty frigates; but the Russian fleet was ill manned, ill officered, and ill equipped. Such a combination under the influence of France would soon have become formidable: and never did the British Cabinet display more decision than in instantly

preparing to crush it. They erred, however, in permitting any petty consideration to prevent them from appointing Nelson to the command.

The season happened to be unusually favourable; so mild a winter had not been known in the Baltic for many years. When Neslon joined the fleet at Yarmouth, he found the Admiral "a little nervous about dark nights and fields of ice." "But we must brace up," said he; "these are not times for nervous systems. I hope we shall again give our northern enemies that hailstorm of bullets, which gives our dear country the dominion of the sea." Before the fleet left Yarmouth, it was sufficiently known that its destination was against Denmark. Some Danes, who belonged to the *Amazon* frigate, went to Captain Riou, and telling him what they had heard, begged that he would get them exchanged into a ship bound on some other destination. "They had no wish," they said, "to quit the British service; but they entreated that they might not be forced to fight against their own country."

The fleet sailed on the 12th of March. Mr. Vansittart sailed in it; the British Cabinet still hoping to obtain its end by negotiation. It was well for England, that Sir Hyde Parker placed a fuller confidence in Nelson than the Government seems to have done at this most important crisis. Nelson's own mind had been made up with its accustomed decision. "All I have gathered of our first plans," said he, "I disapprove most exceedingly. Honour may arise from them; good cannot. I hear we are likely to anchor outside of Cronenburg Castle, instead of Copenhagen, which would give weight to our negotiation. A Danish minister would think twice before he would put his name to war with England, when the next moment he would probably

see his master's fleet in flames, and his capital in ruins. The Dane should see our flag waving every moment he lifted up his head."

Mr. Vansittart left the fleet at the Scaw, and preceded it in a frigate, with a flag of truce.* Precious time was lost by this delay, which was to be purchased by the dearest blood of Britain and Denmark; according to the Danes themselves, the intelligence that a British fleet was seen off the Sound produced a much more general alarm in Copenhagen than its actual arrival in the Roads; for their means of defence were at that time in such a state, that they could hardly hope to resist, still less to repel, an enemy. On the 21st Nelson had a long conference with Sir Hyde; and the next day addressed a letter to him, worthy of himself and of the occasion. Mr. Vansittart's report had then been received. It represented the Danish Government as in the highest degree hostile; and their state of preparation as exceeding what our Cabinet had supposed possible; for Denmark had profited, with all activity, of the leisure which had so impoliticly been given her. "The more I have reflected," said Nelson to his commander, "the more I am confirmed in opinion, that not a moment should be lost in attacking the enemy. They will every day and every hour be stronger: we shall never be so good a match for them as at this moment. The only consideration in my mind is, how to get at them with the least risk to our ships. Here you are, with almost the safety, certainly with the honour, of England, more entrusted to you than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer. On your decision depends whether our country shall be degraded in the eyes of Europe, or whether she shall rear her head higher than ever. Again do I repeat, never did our country depend

so much on the success of any fleet as on this. How best to honour our country, and abate the pride of her enemies, must be the subject of your deepest consideration."

Supposing him to force the passage of the Sound, Nelson thought some damage might be done among the masts and yards; though, perhaps, not one of them but would be serviceable again. But he still insisted on attacking Copenhagen. For this he proposed two modes. One was, to pass Cronenburg, taking the risk of damage; and then coming down the King's Channel, attack the Danish line of floating batteries and ships, as might be found convenient. This would prevent a junction, and might give an opportunity of bombarding Copenhagen. Or to take the passage of the Belt, which might be accomplished in four or five days; and then the attack by Draco might be made, and the junction of the Russians prevented. Supposing them through the Belt, he proposed that a detachment of the fleet should be sent to destroy the Russian squadron at Revel; and that the business at Copenhagen should be attempted with the remainder. "The measure," he said, "might be thought bold: but I am of opinion the boldest measures are the safest."

The pilots, as men who had nothing but safety to think of, were terrified by the formidable report of the batteries of Elsineur, and the tremendous preparations yhich our negotiators, who were now returned from their fruitless mission, had witnessed. They, therefore. persuaded Sir Hyde to prefer the passage of the Belt. "Let it be by the Sound, by the Belt, or anyhow," cried Nelson, "only lose not an hour!" On the 26th they sailed for the Belt: such was the habitual reserve of Sir Hyde, that his own Captain, the Captain of the fleet,

did not know which course he had resolved to take till the fleet were getting under weigh.

The next day was more idly expended in despatching a flag of truce to the Governor of Cronenburg Castle, to ask whether he had received orders to fire at the British fleet: as the Admiral must consider the first gun to be a declaration of war on the part of Denmark. A soldier-like and becoming answer was returned to this formality. The Governor said that the British Minister had not been sent away from Copenhagen, but had obtained a passport at his own demand. He himself, as a soldier, could not meddle with politics; but he was not at liberty to suffer a fleet, of which the intention was not yet known, to approach the guns of the castle which he had the honour to command: and he requested, if the British Admiral should think proper to make any proposals to the King of Denmark, that he might be apprised of it before the fleet approached nearer. During this intercourse, a Dane, who came on board the Commander's ship, having occasion to express his business in writing, found the pen blunt; and, holding it up, sarcastically said, "If your guns are not better pointed than your pens, you will make little impression on Copenhagen!"

The two following days were calm. Orders had been given to pass through the Sound as soon as the wind would permit; and, on the afternoon of the 29th, the ships were cleared for action, with an alacrity characteristic of British seamen. At daybreak, on the 30th, it blew from N.W. The signal was made, and the fleet moved on in order of battle; Nelson's division in the van, Sir Hyde's in the centre, and Admiral Graves's in the rear.

Great actions, whether military or naval, have generally given celebrity to the scenes from whence

they are denominated; and thus petty villages, and capes and bays, known only to the coasting trader, become associated with mighty deeds, and their names are made conspicuous in the history of the world. Here, however, the scene was every way worthy of the drama. The political importance of the Sound is such, that grand objects are not needed there to impress the imagination; yet is the channel full of grand and interesting objects, both of art and nature. This passage, which Denmark had so long considered as the key of the Baltic, is, in its narrowest part, about three miles wide; and here the city of Elsineur is situated: except Copenhagen the most flourishing of the Danish towns. Adjoining Elsineur, and at the edge of the peninsular promontory, upon the nearest point of land to the Swedish coast, stands Cronenburg Castle, a magnificent pile—at once a palace, and fortress, and state-prison, with its spires and towers, and battlements and batteries. On the left of the strait is the old Swedish city of Helsinburg: at the foot and on the side of a hill. The Danish shores consist partly of ridges of sand; but more frequently they are diversified with corn-fields, meadows, slopes, and are covered with rich wood, and villages, and villas, and summer palaces belonging to the king and the nobility, and denoting the vicinity of a great capital. The isles of Huen, Statholm, and Amak, appear in the widening channel; and at the distance of twenty miles from Elsineur stands Copenhagen in full view; the best city of the North, and one of the finest capitals of Europe; visible, with its stately spires, far off.

The Sound being the only frequented entrance to the Baltic, the great Mediterranean of the North, few parts of the sea display so frequent a navigation. In the height of the season not fewer than a hundred vessels

pass every four-and-twenty hours, for many weeks in succession: but never had so busy or so splendid a scene been exhibited there as on this day, when the British fleet prepared to force that passage, where, till now, all ships had vailed their topsails to the flag of Denmark.

The Danes, having improved every moment which ill-timed negotiation and baffling weather gave them, had lined their shores with batteries; and as soon as the leading ship came abreast of them, a fire was opened from about a hundred pieces of cannon and mortars: our light vessels immediately, in return, opened their fire upon the castle. Here was all the pompous circumstance, and exciting reality of war, without its effects; for this ostentatious display was but a bloodless prelude to the wide and sweeping destruction which was soon to follow. The enemy's shot fell near enough to splash the water on board our ships; not relying upon any forbearance of the Swedes, they meant to have kept the mid-channel; but, when they perceived that not a shot was fired from Helsinburg, and that no batteries were to be seen on the Swedish shore, they inclined to that side, so as completely to get out of reach of the Danish guns. The uninterrupted blaze which was kept up from them till the fleet had passed, served only to exhilarate our sailors, and afford them matter for jest, as the shot fell in showers a full cable's length short of its destined aim. A few rounds were returned from some of our leading ships, till they perceived its inutility; this, however, occasioned the only bloodshed of the day, some of our men being killed and wounded by the bursting of a gun.

As soon as the main body had passed, the gun vessels followed, desisting from their bombardment, which had been as innocent as that of the enemy; and, about

midday, the whole fleet anchored between the island of Huen and Copenhagen. Sir Hyde, with Nelson, Admiral Graves, some of the senior Captains, and the commanding officers of the artillery and the troops, then proceeded in a lugger, to reconnoitre the enemy's means of defence; a formidable line of ships, galleys, fireships, and gun-boats, flanked and supported by extensive batteries, and occupying, from one extreme point to the other, an extent of nearly four miles.

A council of war was held in the afternoon. It was apparent that the Danes could not be attacked without great difficulty and risk; and some of the members of the council spoke of the number of the Swedes and the Russians whom they should afterwards have to engage, as a consideration which ought to be borne in mind. Nelson, who kept pacing the cabin, impatient as he ever was of anything which savoured of irresolution, repeatedly said, "The more numerous the better, I wish they were twice as many; the easier the victory, depend on it." The plan upon which he had determined, was, to attack the head of their line, and confuse their movements. "Close with a Frenchman," he used to say, "but outmanœuvre a Russian." He offered his services for the attack, requiring ten sail of the line and the whole of the smaller craft. Sir Hyde gave him two more line of battle ships than he asked, and left everything to his judgment.

The enemy's force was not the only, nor the greatest, obstacle with which the British fleet had to contend; there was another to be overcome before they could come in contact with it. The channel was little known, and extremely intricate; all the buoys had been removed: and the Danes considered this difficulty as almost insuperable thinking the channel impracticable for so

large a fleet. Nelson himself saw the soundings made, and the buoys laid down, boating it upon this exhausting service, day and night, till it was effected.

At the first council of war, opinions inclined to an attack from the eastward; but the next day, the wind being southerly, after a second examination of the Danish position, it was determined to attack from the south, approaching in the manner which Nelson had suggested. On the morning of the 1st of April the whole fleet removed to an anchorage within two leagues of the town, a shoal lying exactly before the town, at about three-quarters of a mile distance, and extending along its whole sea front. The King's Channel, where there is deep water, is between this shoal and the town; and here the Danes had arranged their line of defence, as near the shore as possible. The fleet having anchored, Nelson made his last examination of the ground; and, about one o'clock, returning to his own ship, threw out the signal to weigh. It was received with a shout throughout the whole division. They weighed with a light and favourable wind. The whole division coasted along the outer edge of the shoal, doubled its farther extremity, and anchored just as the darkness closed—the headmost of the enemy's line not being more than two miles distant. The signal to prepare for action had been made early in the evening; and as his own anchor dropped, Nelson called out, "I will fight them the moment I have a fair wind."

The Danes, meantime, had not been idle. No sooner did the guns of Cronenburg make it known to the whole city that all negotiation was at an end, that the British fleet was passing the Sound, and that the dispute between the two crowns must now be decided by arms, than a spirit displayed itself most honourable

to the Danish character. All ranks offered themselves to the service of their country; the University furnished a corps of twelve hundred youth, the flower of Denmark—it was one of those emergencies in which little drilling or discipline is necessary to render courage available; they had nothing to learn but how to manage the guns, and day and night were employed in practising them. When the movements of Nelson's squadron were perceived, it was known when and where the attack was to be expected, and the line of defence was manned indiscriminately by soldiers, sailors, and citizens.

This was an awful night for Copenhagen—far more so than for the British fleet, where the men were accustomed to battle and victory, and had none of those objects before their eyes which rendered death terrible. Nelson sat down to table with a large party of his officers; he was, as he was ever wont to be when on the eve of action, in high spirits, and drank to a leading wind, and to the success of the morrow. The incessant fatigue of body, as well as mind, which Nelson had undergone during the last three days, had so exhausted him, that he was earnestly urged to go to his cot; and his old servant, Allen, using that kind of authority which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume on such occasions, insisted upon his complying. The cot was placed on the floor, and he continued to dictate from it. About one, the orders were completed; and half a dozen clerks, in the foremost cabin, proceeded to transcribe them: Nelson frequently calling out to them from his cot to hasten their work, for the wind was becoming fair. Instead of attempting to get a few hours' sleep, he was constantly receiving reports on this important point. At daybreak it was announced as becoming perfectly fair. The clerks

finished their work about six. Nelson, who was already up, breakfasted, and made signal for all captains.

Between eight and nine, the pilots and masters were ordered on board the Admiral's ships. The signal for action had been made, the wind was fair, not a moment to be lost. Nelson urged them to be steady, to be resolute, and to decide; but they wanted the only ground for steadiness and decision in such cases. This was one of the most painful moments of his life; and he always spoke of it with bitterness. "I experienced in the Sound," said he, "the misery of having the honour of our country intrusted to a set of pilots who have no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger, and their own silly heads clear of shot. Everybody knows what I must have suffered: and if any merit attaches itself to me it was for combating the dangers of the shallows in defiance of them."

At length Mr. Brierley, the master of the *Bellona*, declared that he was prepared to lead the fleet: his judgment was acceded to by the rest: they returned to their ships; and at half-past nine the signal was made to weigh in succession.

At five minutes after ten the action began. The first half of our fleet was engaged in about half an hour; and by half-past eleven the battle became general. The plan of the attack had been complete; but seldom has any plan been more disconcerted by untoward accidents. Of twelve ships of the line, one was entirely useless, and two others in a situation where they could not render half the service which was required of them. Of the squadron of gun-brigs, only one could get into action; the rest were prevented by baffling currents from weathering the eastern end of the shoal; and only two of the bomb-vessels could reach their station.

Nelson's agitation had been extreme when he saw himself, before the action begun, deprived of a fourth part of his ships of the line; but no sooner was he in battle, where his squadron was received with the fire of more than a thousand guns, than, as if that artillery, like music, had driven away all care and painful thoughts, his countenance brightened; and, as a bystander describes him, his conversation became joyous, animated, elevated, and delightful. The Commander-in-Chief meantime, near enough to the scene of action to know the unfavourable accidents which had so materially weakened Nelson, and yet too distant to know the real state of the contending parties, suffered the most dreadful anxiety. To get to his assistance was impossible; both wind and current were against him. Fear for the event, in such circumstances, would naturally preponderate in the bravest mind; and, at one o'clock, perceiving that, after three hours' endurance, the enemy's fire was unslackened, he began to despair of success. "I will make the signal of recall," said he to his captain, "for Nelson's sake. If he is in a condition to continue the action successfully, he will disregard it; if he is not, it will be an excuse for his retreat, and no blame can be imputed to him."

Nelson was at this time, in all the excitement of action, pacing the quarter-deck. A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, "It is warm work; and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment": and then, stopping short at the gangway, added with emotion, "But mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands." About this time the Signal Lieutenant called out, that the signal for discontinuing the action was thrown out by the Commander-in-Chief. He con-

tinued to walk the deck, and appeared to take no notice of it. The signal officer met him at the next turn, and asked if he should repeat it. "No," he replied; "acknowledge it." Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted; and being answered in the affirmative, said, "Mind you keep it so." He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. "Do you know," said he to Mr. Ferguson, "what is shown on board the Commander-in-Chief? Number thirty-nine!" Mr. Ferguson asked what that meant. "Why, to leave off action!" Then shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words, "Leave off action? Now, damn me if I do! You know, Foley," turning to the Captain, "I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes": and then, putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, "I do not really see the signal!" Presently he exclaimed, "Damn the signal! Keep mine for closer battle flying! That's the way I answer such signals! Nail mine to the mast!"

The action continued along the line with unabated vigour on our side, and with the most determined resolution on the part of the Danes. They fought to great advantage, because most of the vessels in their line of defence were without masts; the few which had any standing, had their topmasts struck, and the hulls could not be seen at intervals.

Between one and two the fire of the Danes slackened; about two it ceased from the greater part of their line, and some of their lighter ships were adrift. It was, however, difficult to take possession of those which struck, because the batteries on Amak Island protected them; and because an irregular fire was kept up from

the ships themselves as the boats approached. This arose from the nature of the action: the crews were continually reinforced from the shore: and fresh men coming on board, did not inquire whether the flag had been struck, or, perhaps, did not heed it; many or most of them never having been engaged in war before—knowing nothing, therefore, of its laws, and thinking only of defending their country to the last extremity.

By half-past two the action had ceased except with the ships ahead and the Crown Batteries. Nelson seeing the manner in which his boats were fired upon, when they went to take possession of the prizes, became angry, and said, he must either send on shore to have this irregular proceeding stopped, or send a fire-ship and burn them. Half the shot from the Trekroner, and from the batteries at Amak, at this time, struck the surrendered ships, four of which had got close together: and the fire of the English, in return, was equally or even more destructive to these poor devoted Danes. Nelson, who was as humane as he was brave, was shocked at this massacre—for such he called it; and with a presence of mind peculiar to himself, and never more signally displayed than now, he retired into the stern-gallery, and wrote thus to the Crown Prince: "Lord Nelson has directions to spare Denmark when no longer resisting; but if the firing is continued on the part of Denmark, Lord Nelson will be obliged to set on fire all the floating-batteries he has taken, without having the power of saving the brave Danes who have defended them." The batteries, however, continued their fire. The Danish Prince asked in reply, What was the object of Nelson's note? The British Admiral rejoined: "Lord Nelson's object in sending on shore the flag of truce is humanity: he, therefore, consents that hostilities

shall cease till Lord Nelson can take his prisoners out of the prizes, and he consents to land all the wounded Danes, and to burn or remove his prizes." Nelson, losing not one of the critical moments which he had thus gained, made signal for his leading ships to weigh in succession: they had the shoal to clear, they were much crippled, and their course was immediately under the guns of the Trekroner.

The heat of action was over, and that kind of feeling, which the surrounding scene of havoc was so well fitted to produce, pressed heavily upon Nelson's exhausted spirits. The sky had suddenly become overcast; white flags were waving from the mast-heads of so many shattered ships: the slaughter had ceased, but the grief was to come; for the account of the dead was not yet made up, and no man could tell for what friends he might have to mourn. The very silence which follows the cessation of such a battle becomes a weight upon the heart at first, rather than a relief; and though the work of mutual destruction was at an end, the *Dannebrog* was, at this time, drifting about in flames: presently she blew up; while our boats, which had put off in all directions to assist her, were endeavouring to pick up her devoted crew, few of whom could be saved.

The fate of these men, after the gallantry which they had displayed, particularly affected Nelson; for there was nothing in this action of that indignation against the enemy, and that impression of retributive justice, which at the Nile had given a sterner temper to his mind, and a sense of austere delight, in beholding the vengeance of which he was the appointed minister. The Danes were an honourable foe; they were of English mould as well as English blood; and now that the battle had ceased, he regarded them rather as brethren than

as enemies. There was another reflection also which mingled with these melancholy thoughts, and predisposed him to receive them. He was not here master of his own movements, as at Egypt; he had won the day by disobeying his orders; and in so far as he had been successful, had convicted the Commander-in-Chief of an error in judgment. "Well," said he, as he left the *Elephant*, "I have fought contrary to orders, and I shall perhaps be hanged. Never mind, let them!"

This was indeed a mournful day for Copenhagen! It was Good Friday; but the general agitation, and the mourning which was in every house, made all distinction of days be forgotten. There were, at that hour, thousands in that city who felt, and more, perhaps, who needed, the consolations of Christianity; but few or none who could be calm enough to think of its observances. The English were actively employed in refitting their own ships, securing the prizes, and distributing the prisoners; the Danes in carrying on shore and disposing of the wounded and the dead. It had been a murderous action. Our loss, in killed and wounded, was nine hundred and fifty-three. The loss of the Danes, including prisoners, amounted to about six thousand. The negotiations meantime went on; and it was agreed that Nelson should have an interview with the Prince the following day. Hardy and Freemantle landed with him. This was a thing as unexampled as the other circumstances of the battle. A strong guard was appointed to escort him to the palace, as much for the purpose of security as of honour. The populace, according to the British account, showed a mixture of admiration, curiosity, and displeasure, at beholding that man in the midst of them who had inflicted such wounds upon Denmark. But there were neither acclamations nor

murmurs. The preliminaries of the negotiations were adjusted at this interview. During the repast which followed, Nelson, with all the sincerity of his character, bore willing testimony to the valour of his foes. He told the Prince that he had been in a hundred and five engagements, but that this was the most tremendous of all. "The French," he said, "fought bravely; but they could not have stood for one hour the fight which the Danes had supported for four."

The sympathy of the Danes for their countrymen who had bled in their defence, was not weakened by distance of time or place in this instance. Things needful for the service, or the comfort of the wounded, were sent in profusion to the hospitals, till the superintendents gave public notice that they could receive no more. On the third day after the action, the dead were buried in the naval churchyard: the ceremony was made as public and as solemn as the occasion required; such a procession had never before been seen in that, or, perhaps, in any other city. A public monument was erected upon the spot where the slain were gathered together. A subscription was opened on the day of the funeral for the relief of the sufferers, and collections in aid of it made throughout all the churches in the kingdom. A monument was raised in the midst of the church, surmounted by the Danish colours; young maidens, dressed in white, stood round it, with either one who had been wounded in the battle, or the widow and orphans of someone who had fallen: a suitable oration was delivered from the pulpit, and patriotic hymns and songs were afterwards performed. Medals were distributed to all the officers, and to the men who had distinguished themselves. Poets and painters vied with each other in celebrating a battle which, disastrous as

it was, had yet been honourable to their country: some, with pardonable sophistry, represented the advantage of the day as on their own side. One writer discovered a more curious, but less disputable ground of satisfaction, in the reflection, that Nelson, as may be inferred from his name, was of Danish descent, and his actions, therefore, the Dane argued, were attributable to Danish valour.

The negotiation was continued during the five following days; and, in that interval, the prizes were disposed of, in a manner which was little approved by Nelson: all but one were destroyed.

On the 9th Nelson landed again, to conclude the terms of the armistice. During its continuance the armed ships and vessels of Denmark were to remain in their then actual situation, and the treaty of Armed Neutrality, as far as related to the co-operation of Denmark, was suspended. The prisoners were to be sent on shore; an acknowledgment being given for them, and for the wounded also, that they might be carried to Great Britain's credit in the account of war, in case hostilities should be renewed. The British fleet was allowed to provide itself with all things requisite for the health and comfort of its men. A difficulty arose respecting the duration of the armistice. The Danish Commissioners fairly stated their fears of Russia; and Nelson, with that frankness which sound policy and the sense of power seem often to require as well as justify in diplomacy, told them his reason for demanding a long term was, that he might have time to act against the Russian fleet, and then return to Copenhagen. Neither party would yield upon this point; and one of the Danes hinted at the renewal of hostilities. "Renew hostilities!" cried Nelson to one of his friends, "tell him we

are ready at a moment! Ready to bombard this very night!" The conference, however, proceeded amicably on both sides, and as the Commissioners could not agree upon this head, they broke up, leaving Nelson to settle it with the Prince. A levee was held forthwith in one of the state rooms and it was agreed that the armistice should continue fourteen weeks; and that, at its termination, fourteen days' notice should be given before the recommencement of hostilities.

For the battle of Copenhagen, Nelson was raised to the rank of Viscount: an inadequate mark of reward for services so splendid and of such paramount importance to the dearest interests of England. There was, however, some prudence in dealing out honours to him step by step; had he lived long enough, he would have fought his way up to a dukedom.

CHAPTER VIII

Sir Hyde Parker is recalled, and Nelson appointed Commander—He goes to Revel—Settlement of affairs in the Baltic—Unsuccessful attempt upon the flotilla at Boulogne—Peace of Amiens—Nelson takes the command in the Mediterranean on the renewal of the war—Escape of the Toulon Fleet—Nelson chases them to the West Indies, and back—Delivers up his squadron to Admiral Cornwallis, and lands in England.

When Nelson informed Earl St. Vincent that the armistice had been concluded, he told him also, without reserve, his own discontent at the dilatoriness and indecision which he witnessed, and could not remedy. Fatigue, incessant anxiety, and a climate little suited to one of a tender constitution, made him at this time seriously determine upon returning home. "If the northern business were not settled," he said, "they must send more Admirals; for the keen air of the north had cut him to the heart." He felt the want of activity and decision in the Commander-in-Chief more keenly; and this affected his spirits, and, consequently, his health, more than the inclemency of the Baltic. Soon after the armistice was signed, Sir Hyde proceeded to the eastward, with such ships as were fit for service, leaving Nelson to follow with the rest, as soon as those which had received slight damages should be repaired, and the rest sent to England. In passing between the isles of Amak and Saltholm, most of the ships touched the ground, and some of them stuck fast for a while; no serious injury, however, was sustained. It was intended to act against the Russians first, before the breaking up of the frost should enable them to leave Revel; but learning on the way that the Swedes had put to sea to effect a junction with them, Sir Hyde altered

his course, in hopes of intercepting this part of the enemy's force.

Nelson had at this time provided for the more pressing emergencies of the service, and prepared, on the 18th, to follow the fleet. A contrary wind, however, prevented Nelson from moving; and on that same evening, while he was thus delayed, information reached him of the relative situation of the Swedish and British fleets, and the probability of an action. The fleet was nearly ten leagues distant, and both wind and current contrary; but it was not possible that Nelson could wait for a favourable season under such an expectation. He ordered his boat immediately, and stepped into it. Night was setting in—one of the cold spring nights of the North, and it was discovered, soon after they had left the ship, that in their haste they had forgotten to provide him with a boat-cloak. He, however, forbade them to return for one; and when one of his companions offered his own great-coat, and urged him to make use of it, he replied, "I thank you very much; but, to tell you the truth, my anxiety keeps me sufficiently warm at present."

On the following morning the Swedes were discovered; as soon, however, as they perceived the English approaching, they retired, and took shelter in Carlscrona, behind the batteries on the island, at the entrance of that port. Sir Hyde sent in a flag of truce, stating that Denmark had concluded an armistice, and requiring an explicit declaration from the Court of Sweden, whether it would adhere to or abandon the hostile measures which it had taken against Great Britain. The commander replied, "That he could not answer a question which did not come within the particular circle of his duty; but that the King was then at Maloe, and

would soon be at Carlscrona." Gustavus shortly afterwards arrived, and an answer was then returned to this effect: "That his Swedish Majesty would not, for a moment, fail to fulfil, with fidelity and sincerity, the engagements he had entered into with his allies; but he would not refuse to listen to equitable proposals made by deputies furnished with proper authority by the King of Great Britain to the united Northern Powers." Satisfied with this answer, and with the known disposition of the Swedish Court, Sir Hyde sailed for the Gulf of Finland; but he had not proceeded far before a dispatch-boat, from the Russian Ambassador at Copenhagen, arrived, bringing intelligence of the death of the Emperor Paul; and that his successor Alexander had accepted the offer made by England to his father of terminating the dispute by a convention: the British Admiral was, therefore, required to desist from all further hostilities. It was not without severe mortification, that he saw the Commander-in-Chief return to the coast of Zealand, and anchor in Kioge Bay, there to wait patiently for what might happen.

There the fleet remained, till despatches arrived from home, on the 5th of May, recalling Sir Hyde, and appointing Nelson Commander-in-Chief.

Nelson wrote to Earl St. Vincent that he was unable to hold this honourable station. Admiral Graves also was so ill, as to be confined to his bed; and he entreated that some person might come out and take the command. "I will endeavour," said he, "to do my best while I remain; but, my dear lord, I shall either soon go to heaven, I hope, or must rest quiet for a time. If Sir Hyde were gone, I would now be under sail." On the day when this was written, he received news of his appointment. Not a moment was now lost.

His first signal, as Commander-in-Chief, was to hoist in all launches, and prepare to weigh; and on the 7th he sailed from Kioge. Part of his fleet was left at Bornholm, to watch the Swedes: from whom he required and obtained an assurance, that the British trade in the Cattegat, and in the Baltic, should not be molested. Meantime, he himself, with ten sail of the line, two frigates, a brig, and a schooner, made for the Gulf of Finland. Paul, in one of the freaks of his tyranny, had seized upon all the British effects in Russia, and even considered British subjects as his prisoners. "I will have all the English shipping and property restored," said Nelson. The wind was fair, and carried him in four days to Revel Roads. But the Bay had been clear of firm ice on the 29th of April, while the English were lying idly at Kioge. The Russians had cut through the ice and their whole squadron had sailed for Cronstadt on the third. Before that time it had lain at the mercy of the English.

It so happened that there was no cause to regret the opportunity which had been lost, and Nelson immediately put the intentions of Russia to the proof. He sent on shore, to say that he came with friendly views, and was ready to return a salute. On their part the salute was delayed, till a message was sent to them to inquire for what reason; and the officer, whose neglect had occasioned the delay, was put under arrest. Nelson wrote to the Emperor, proposing to wait on him personally, and congratulate him on his accession, and urged the immediate release of British subjects, and restoration of British property.

The answer arrived on the 16th; Nelson, meantime, had exchanged visits with the Governor, and the most friendly intercourse had subsisted between the ships and

the shore. Alexander's ministers, in their reply, expressed their surprise at the arrival of a British fleet in a Russian port, and their wish that it should return; they professed, on the part of Russia, the most friendly disposition towards Great Britain; but declined the personal visit of Lord Nelson, unless he came in a single ship. There was a suspicion implied in this, which stung Nelson: and he said the Russian ministers would never have written thus if their fleet had been at Revel. He wrote an immediate reply, expressing what he felt: he told the court of Petersburg, "That the word of a British Admiral, when given in explanation of any part of his conduct, was as sacred as that of any sovereign in Europe." And he repeated, "that, under other circumstances, it would have been his anxious wish to have paid his personal respects to the Emperor, and signed with his own hand the act of amity between the two countries." Having despatched this, he stood out to sea immediately, having a brig to bring off the provisions which had been contracted for, and to settle the accounts. "I hope all is right," said he, writing to our Ambassador at Berlin: "but seamen are but bad negotiators; for we put to issue in five minutes what diplomatic forms would be five months doing."

On his way down the Baltic, however, he met the Russian Admiral whom the Emperor, in reply to Sir Hyde's overtures, had sent to communicate personally with the British Commander-in-Chief. The reply was such as had been wished and expected: and these negotiators going, seaman-like, straight to their object, satisfied each other of the friendly intentions of their respective governments. Nelson then anchored off Rostock; and there he received an answer to his last despatch from Revel, in which the Russian Court ex-

pressed their regret that there should have been any misconception between them; informed him, that the British vessels which Paul had detained were ordered to be liberated, and invited him to Petersburg in whatever mode might be most agreeable to himself.

From Rostock the fleet returned to Kioge Bay. Nelson saw that the temper of the Danes towards England was such as naturally arose from the chastisement which they had so recently received. He saw also that the Danish Cabinet was completely subservient to France; and things were done in such open violation of the armistice, that Nelson thought a second infliction of vengeance would soon be necessary.

Nelson was not deceived in his judgment of the Danish Cabinet, but the battle of Copenhagen had crippled its power. The death of the Czar Paul had broken the confederacy; and that Cabinet therefore was compelled to defer, till a more convenient season, the indulgence of its enmity towards Great Britain. Soon afterwards Admiral Sir Charles Maurice Pole arrived to take the command. The business, military and political, had by that time been so far completed, that the presence of the British fleet soon became no longer necessary.

When Nelson left the fleet, this speedy termination of the expedition, though confidently expected, was not certain; and he, in his unwillingness to weaken the British force, thought at one time of traversing Jutland in his boat, and finding his way home from thence. This intention was not executed: but he returned in a brig, declining to accept a frigate. On his arrival at Yarmouth (July 1st), the first thing he did was to visit the hospital, and see the men who had been wounded in the late battle.

He had not been many weeks on shore before he was called upon to undertake a service for which no Nelson was required. Buonaparte, who was now First Consul, and in reality sole ruler, of France, was making preparations, upon a great scale, for invading England. A general alarm was excited; and, in condescension to this unworthy feeling, Nelson was appointed to a command (July 27th), extending from Orfordness to Beachy Head, on both shores; a sort of service, he said, for which he felt no other ability than what might be found in his zeal.

To this service, however, such as it was, he applied with his wonted alacrity, though in no cheerful frame of mind. Having hoisted his flag in the *Medusa* frigate, he went to reconnoitre Boulogne; the point from which it was supposed the great attempt would be made, and which the French, in fear of an attack themselves, were fortifying with all care. He approached near enough to sink two of their floating-batteries, and to destroy a few gunboats which were without the pier; what damage was done within could not be ascertained. Enough was done to show the enemy that they could not, with impunity, come outside their own ports. Nelson was satisfied by what he saw, that they meant to make an attempt from this place, but that it was impracticable.

The *Medusa*, returning to our own shores, anchored off Harwich; and, when Nelson wished to get to the Nore in her, the wind rendered it impossible to proceed there by the usual channel. In haste to be at the Nore, he requested the maritime surveyor of the coast, Mr. Spence, to get him into the Swin, by any channel.

Nelson's eye was upon Flushing—"To take possession of that place," he said, "would be a week's expedition for four or five thousand troops." This,

however, required a consultation with the Admiralty; and that something might be done meantime, he resolved upon attacking the flotilla in the mouth of Boulogne harbour. This resolution was made in deference to the opinion of others, and to the public feeling which was so preposterously excited. He himself scrupled not to assert, that the French army would never embark at Boulogne for the invasion of England; and he owned, that this boat-warfare was not exactly congenial to his feelings. " Whilst I serve," said he, " I will do it actively, and to the very best of my abilities. I require nursing like a child," he added; " my mind carries me beyond my strength, and will do me up; but such is my nature."

The attack was made by the boats of the squadron in five divisions. The previous essay had taught the French the weak parts of their position; and they omitted no means of strengthening it, and of guarding against the expected attempt. The boats put off (August 15th) about half-an-hour before midnight; but, owing to the darkness, and tide and half-tide, which must always make night attacks so uncertain on the coasts of the Channel, the divisions separated. One could not arrive at all; another not till near daybreak. The others made their attack gallantly; but the enemy were fully prepared. Many were taken possession of; and, though they could not have been brought out, would have been burned, had not the French resorted to a mode of offence, which they have often used, but which no other people have ever been wicked enough to employ. The moment the firing ceased on board one of their own vessels they fired upon it from the shore, perfectly regardless of their own men.

The commander of one of the French divisions acted like a generous enemy. He hailed the boats as they

approached, and cried out in English: "Let me advise you, my brave Englishmen, to keep your distance: you can do nothing here; and it is only uselessly shedding the blood of brave men to make the attempt."

He now wished to be relieved from this service. The country, he said, had attached a confidence to his name, which he had submitted to, and therefore had cheerfully repaired to the station; but this boat business, though it might be part of a great plan of invasion, could never be the only one, and he did not think it was a command for a Vice-Admiral. An end was put to this uncomfortable state of mind when, fortunately for him, as well as happily for the nation, the peace of Amiens was, just at this time, signed.

He had purchased a house and estate at Merton, in Surrey; meaning to pass his days there in the society of Sir William and Lady Hamilton. His pensions for his victories, and for the loss of his eye and arm, amounted with his half-pay to about £3,400 a year. From this he gave £1,800 to Lady Nelson, £200 to a brother's widow, and £150 for the education of his children; and he paid £500 interest for borrowed money; so that Nelson was comparatively a poor man. The depression of spirits under which he had long laboured arose partly from this state of his circumstances, and partly from other disquietudes. A few months afterwards, Nelson's father died at the age of seventy-nine.

Soon after the conclusion of peace, tidings arrived of our final and decisive successes in Egypt: in consequence of which, the Common Council voted their thanks to the army and navy for bringing the campaign to so glorious a conclusion.

The happiness which Nelson enjoyed in the society of his chosen friends was of no long continuance. Sir

William Hamilton, who was far advanced in years, died early in 1803. He expired in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand; and almost in his last words left her to his protection; requesting him that he would see justice done her by the Government, as he knew what she had done for her country. He left him her portrait in enamel, calling him his dearest friend; the most virtuous, loyal, and truly brave character he had ever known. Sir William's pension, of £1,200 a year, ceased with his death. Nelson applied to Mr. Addington in Lady Hamilton's behalf, stating the important service which she had rendered to the fleet at Syracuse; and Mr. Addington, it is said, acknowledged that she had a just claim upon the gratitude of the country. This barren acknowledgment was all that was obtained: but a sum, equal to the pension which her husband had enjoyed, was settled on her by Nelson, and paid in monthly payments during his life.

A few weeks after this event, the war renewed; and, the day after His Majesty's message to Parliament, Nelson departed to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet. The war, he thought, could not be long; just enough to make him independent in pecuniary matters.

He took his station immediately off Toulon and there, with incessant vigilance, waited for the coming out of the enemy.

When he had been fourteen months off Toulon, he received a vote of thanks from the city of London, for his skill and perseverance in blockading that port, so as to prevent the French from putting to sea. Nelson then remarked that the junior flag officers of his fleet had been omitted in this vote of thanks; and his surprise at the omission was expressed with more asperity,

perhaps, than an offence, so entirely and manifestly unintentional, deserved; but it arose from that generous regard for the feelings as well as interests of all who were under his command, which made him as much beloved in the fleets of Britain, as he was dreaded in those of the enemy.

Never was any commander more beloved. He governed men by their reason and their affections; they knew that he was incapable of caprice or tyranny; and they obeyed him with alacrity and joy, because he possessed their confidence as well as their love. "Our Nel," they used to say, "is as brave as a lion, and as gentle as a lamb." Severe discipline he detested, though he had been bred in a severe school; he never inflicted corporal punishment, if it were possible to avoid it, and when compelled to enforce it, he, who was familiar with wounds and death, suffered like a woman. In his whole life Nelson was never known to act unkindly towards an officer. If he was asked to prosecute one for ill behaviour, he used to answer: "That there was no occasion for him to ruin a poor devil, who was sufficiently his own enemy to ruin himself." But in Nelson there was more than the easiness and humanity of a happy nature; he did not merely abstain from injury; his was an active and watchful benevolence, ever desirous not only to render justice, but to do good. During the peace, he had spoken in Parliament upon the abuses respecting prize-money; and had submitted plans to Government for more easily manning the navy, and preventing desertion from it, by bettering the condition of the seamen. He proposed that their certificates should be registered, and that every man who had served, with a good character, five years in war, should receive a bounty of two guineas annually after that time, and of

four guineas after eight years. "This," he said, "might, at first sight, appear an enormous sum for the State to pay; but the average life of seamen is, from hard service, finished at forty-five: he cannot, therefore, enjoy the annuity many years; and the interest of the money saved by their not deserting would go far to pay the whole expense."

To his midshipmen he ever showed the most winning kindness, encouraging the diffident, tempering the hasty, counselling and befriending both. "Recollect," he used to say, "that you must be a seaman to be an officer; and also, that you cannot be a good officer without being a gentleman."—A Lieutenant wrote to him to say, that he was dissatisfied with his Captain. Nelson's answer was in that spirit of perfect wisdom and perfect goodness, which regulated his whole conduct toward those who were under his command. "I have just received your letter; and I am truly sorry that any difference should arise between your Captain, who has the reputation of being one of the bright officers of the service, and yourself, a very young man, and a very young officer, who must naturally have much to learn; therefore the chance is, that you are perfectly wrong in the disagreement. However, as your present situation must be very disagreeable, I will certainly take an early opportunity of removing you, provided your conduct to your present Captain be such, that another may not refuse to receive you."

The gentleness and benignity of his disposition never made him forget what was due to discipline. Being on one occasion applied to, to save a young officer from a court-martial, which he had provoked by his misconduct, his reply was, "We would all do everything in our power to oblige so gallant and good an

officer as our friend Warren," in whose name the intercession had been made; "But what," he added, "would he do if he were here?—Exactly what I have done, and am still willing to do. The young man must write such a letter of contrition as would be an acknowledgment of his great fault; and, with a sincere promise, if his Captain will intercede to prevent the impending court-martial, never to so misbehave again. On his Captain's enclosing me such a letter, with a request to cancel the order for the trial, I might be induced to do it; but the letters and reprimand will be given in the public order-book of the fleet, and read to all the officers. The young man has pushed himself forward to notice, and he must take the consequence. It was upon the quarter-deck, in the face of the ship's company, that he treated his Captain with contempt; and I am in duty bound to support the authority and consequence of every officer under my command. A poor ignorant seaman is for ever punished for contempt to *his* superior."

Instead of lessening the power of the commander, Nelson would have wished to see it increased; it was absolutely necessary, he thought, that merit should be rewarded at the moment, and that the officers of the fleet should look up to the Commander-in-Chief for their reward. He himself was never more happy than when he could promote those who were deserving of promotion. Many were the services which he thus rendered unsolicited; and frequently the officer, in whose behalf he had interested himself with the Admiralty, did not know to whose friendly interference he was indebted for his good fortune. He used to say, "I wish it to appear as a Godsend." The love which he bore the navy made him promote the interests, and honour the memory, of all who had added to its glories. "The near relations

of brother officers," he said, " he considered as legacies to the service." Upon mention being made to him of a son of Rodney, by the Duke of Clarence, his reply was: " I agree with your Royal Highness most entirely, that the son of a Rodney ought to be the *protege* of every person in the kingdom, and particularly of the sea officers. Had I known that there had been this claimant, some of my own Lieutenants must have given way to such a name, and he should have been placed in the *Victory;* she is full, and I have twenty on my list; but, whatever numbers I have, the name of Rodney must cut many of them out." Such was the proper sense which Nelson felt of what was due to splendid services and illustrious names.

When Nelson took the command, it was expected that the Mediterranean would be an active scene. Nelson well understood the character of Napoleon, who was now sole tyrant of France; and knowing that he was as ready to attack his friends as his enemies, knew, therefore, that nothing could be more uncertain than the direction of the fleet from Toulon, whenever it should put to sea:— " It had as many destinations," he said, " as there were countries." The momentous revolutions of the last ten years had given him ample matter for reflection, as well as opportunities for observation; the film was cleared from his eyes; and now, when the French no longer went abroad with the cry of liberty and equality, he saw that the oppression and misrule of the powers which had been opposed to them had been the main causes of their success, and that those causes would still prepare the way before them. Even in Sicily he perceived, that the people wished for a change, and acknowledged that they had reason to wish for it. In Sardinia the same burden of misgovernment was felt. There was reason to think

that France was preparing to possess herself of this important point, which afforded our fleet facilities for watching Toulon, not to be obtained elsewhere. An expedition was preparing at Corsica for the purpose. It was certain that if the attack were made it would succeed. Nelson thought that the only means to prevent Sardinia from becoming French, was to make it English.

The proposed attack was postponed. Views of wider ambition were opening upon Buonaparte, who now almost undisguisedly aspired to make himself master of the continent of Europe; and Austria was preparing for another struggle, to be conducted as weakly and terminated as miserably as the former. Spain, too, was once more to be involved in war, by the policy of France; that government having in view the double object of employing the Spanish resources against England, and exhausting them, in order to render Spain herself finally its prey. Nelson, who knew that England and the Peninsula ought to be in alliance, for the common interest of both, frequently expressed his hopes that Spain might resume her natural rank among the nations. "We ought," he said, "by mutual consent, to be the very best friends, and both to be ever hostile to France." But he saw that Buonaparte was meditating the destruction of Spain; and that, while the wretched Court of Madrid professed to remain neutral, the appearances of neutrality were scarcely preserved. An order of the year 1771, excluding British ships of war from the Spanish ports, was revived, and put in force; while French privateers, from these very ports, annoyed the British trade, carried their prizes in, and sold them even at Barcelona.

During this state of things, to which the weakness of Spain, and not her will, consented, the enemy's fleet

did not venture to put to sea. Nelson watched it with unremitting and almost unexampled perseverance. The station off Toulon he called his home. "We are in the right fighting trim," said he: "let them come as soon as they please. I never saw a fleet altogether so well officered and manned; would to God the ships were half as good! The finest ones in the service would soon be destroyed by such terrible weather. I know well enough, that if I were to go into Malta, I should save the ships during this bad season; but if I am to watch the French, I must be at sea; and, if at sea, must have bad weather: and if the ships are not fit to stand bad weather, they are useless." Then only he was satisfied, and at ease, when he had the enemy in view. Mr. Elliot, our Minister at Naples, seems, at this time, to have proposed to send a confidential Frenchman to him with information. "I should be very happy," he replied, "to receive authentic intelligence of the destination of the French squadron, their route, and time of sailing. Anything short of this is useless; and I assure your Excellency, that I would not, upon any consideration, have a Frenchman in the fleet, except as a prisoner. I put no confidence in them. Whatever information you can get me I shall be very thankful for; but not a Frenchman comes here. Forgive me, but my mother hated the French."

M. La Touche, who had commanded at Boulogne, commanded now at Toulon. One day while the main body of our fleet was out of sight of land, Rear-Admiral Campbell, stood in close to the port; and M. La Touche, taking advantage of a breeze which sprung up, pushed out with four ships of the line, and three heavy frigates, and chased him about four leagues. The Frenchman, delighted at having found himself in so novel a situation,

published a boastful account; affirming that he had given chase to the whole British fleet, and that Nelson had fled before him! Nelson thought it due to the Admiralty to send home a copy of the *Victory's* log upon this occasion.

Nelson, who used to say, that in sea affairs nothing is impossible, and nothing improbable, feared the more that this Frenchman might get out and elude his vigilance, because he was so especially desirous of catching him. M. La Touche, however, escaped him in another way. He died (August, 1804), according to the French papers, in consequence of walking so often up to the signal-post, to watch the British fleet. "I always pronounced that would be his death," said Nelson. "If he had come out and fought me, it would, at least, have added ten years to my life." The patience with which he had watched Toulon, he spoke of, truly, as a perseverance at sea which had never been surpassed. From May, 1803, to August, 1805, he himself went out of his ship but three times; each of those times was upon the King's service, and neither time of absence exceeded an hour.

While he was on this station, the weather had been so unusually severe, that he said the Mediterranean seemed altered. It was his rule never to contend with the gales; but either run to the southward to escape their violence, or furl all the sails, and make the ships as easy as possible. The men, though he said flesh and blood could hardly stand it, continued in excellent health, which he ascribed, in great measure, to a plentiful supply of lemons and onions. For himself, he thought he could only last till the battle was over. One battle more it was his hope that he might fight. "However," said he, "whatever happens, I have run a

glorious race." "A few months' rest," he says, "I must have very soon. If I am in my grave, what are the mines of Peru to me? But to say the truth, I have no idea of killing myself."

Hostilities at length commenced between Great Britain and Spain. That country, whose miserable government made her subservient to France, was once more destined to lavish her resources and her blood in furtherance of the designs of a perfidious ally. The immediate occasion of the war was the seizure of four treasure-ships by the English.

War between Spain and England was now declared; and on the eighteenth of January, the Toulon fleet, having the Spaniards to co-operate with them, put to sea. Nelson was at anchor off the coast of Sardinia. The fleet immediately unmoored and weighed, and at six in the evening ran through the strait—a passage so narrow that the ships could only pass one at a time; each following the stern lights of its leader. From the position of the enemy, when they were last seen, it was inferred that they must be bound round the southern end of Sardinia. Signal was made the next morning to prepare for battle. Bad weather came on, baffling the one fleet in its object, and the other in its pursuit. Nelson beat about the Sicilian seas for ten days, without obtaining any other information of the enemy, than that one of their ships had put into Ajaccio, dismasted; and having seen that Sardinia, Naples, and Sicily were safe, believing Egypt to be their destination, for Egypt he ran. The disappointment and distress which he had experienced in his former pursuits of the French through the same seas were now renewed; but Nelson, while he endured these anxious and unhappy feelings, was still consoled by the same confidence as on the former

occasion—that, though his judgment might be erroneous, under all circumstances he was right in having formed it.

Baffled thus, he bore up for Malta, and met intelligence from Naples that the French, having been dispersed in a gale, had put back to Toulon. From the same quarter he learned, that a great number of saddles and muskets had been embarked; and this confirmed him in his opinion that Egypt was their destination. That they should have put back in consequence of storms which he had weathered, gave him a consoling sense of British superiority. On February 27, he was compelled to anchor in Pula Bay, in the Gulf of Cagliari. He anchored here that he might not be driven to leeward. As soon as the weather moderated he put to sea again; and, after again beating about against contrary winds, another gale drove him to anchor in the Gulf of Palma. This he made his rendezvous; he knew that the French troops still remained embarked, and, wishing to lead them into a belief that he was stationed upon the Spanish coast, he made his appearance off Parcelona with that intent. About the end of the month, he began to fear that the plan of the expedition was abandoned; and, sailing once more towards his old station off Toulon, he received news that Villeneuve had put to sea with eleven ships of the line, seven frigates, and two brigs. When last seen, they were steering toward the coast of Africa. Nelson first covered the channel between Sardinia and Barbary and then bore up for Palermo, lest the French should pass to the north of Corsica. On the 11th, he felt assured that they were not gone down the Mediterranean; and sending off frigates to Gibraltar, to Lisbon, and to Brest, he endeavoured to get to the westward, beating against westerly winds. After five

days, a neutral gave intelligence that the French had been seen off Cape de Gatte on the 7th. It was soon after ascertained, that they had passed the Straits of Gibraltar on the day following; and Nelson, knowing that they might already be half way to Ireland, or to Jamaica, exclaimed, that he was miserable. One gleam of comfort only came across him, in the reflection that his vigilance had rendered it impossible for them to undertake any expedition in the Mediterranean.

In spite of every exertion which could be made by all the zeal and all the skill of British seamen, he did not get in sight of Gibraltar till the 30th of April; and the wind was then so adverse, that it was impossible to pass the Gut. He anchored in Mazari Bay, on the Barbary shore; obtained supplies from Tetuan; and sailed once more, hoping to hear of the enemy from Cadiz, or from Lisbon. "If nothing is heard of them," said he to the Admiralty, "I shall probably think the rumours which have been spread are true, that their object is the West Indies; and, in that case, I think it my duty to follow them, or to the Antipodes, should I believe that to be their destination."

Nelson had formed his judgment of their destination, and made up his mind accordingly, when Donald Campbell, at that time an Admiral in the Portuguese service, the same person who had given important tidings to Earl St. Vincent of the movements of that fleet from which he won his title, a second time gave timely and momentous intelligence to the flag of his country. He went on board the *Victory*, and communicated to Nelson his certain knowledge that the combined Spanish and French fleets were bound for the West Indies.

The enemy had five-and-thirty days' start; but he calculated that he should gain eight or ten days upon

them by his exertions. May 15th he made Madeira, and on June 4th reached Barbados, whither he had sent dispatches before him; and where he found Admiral Cochrane, with two ships, part of our squadron in those seas being at Jamaica. He found here also accounts that the combined fleets had been seen from St. Lucia on the 28th, standing to the southward, and that Tobago and Trinidad were their objects. This Nelson doubted; but he was alone in his opinion, and yielded it with these foreboding words: "If your intelligence proves false, you lose me the French fleet." Next morning he sailed for Tobago. Here accident confirmed the false intelligence which had, whether from intention or error, misled him. A merchant at Tobago, in the general alarm, not knowing whether this fleet was friend or foe, sent out a schooner to reconnoitre, and acquaint him by signal. The signal which he had chosen happened to be the very one which had been appointed by Colonel Shipley of the Engineers to signify that the enemy were at Trinidad; and as this was at the close of day, there was no opportunity of discovering the mistake. An American brig was met with about the same time, the master of which affirmed that he had been boarded off Granada a few days before by the French, who were standing towards Trinidad. This fresh intelligence removed all doubts. The ships were cleared for action before daylight, and Nelson entered the Bay of Paria on the 7th, hoping and expecting to make the mouths of the Orinoco as famous in the annals of the British navy as those of the Nile. Not an enemy was there; and it was discovered that accident and artifice had combined to lead him so far to leeward, that there could have been little hope of fetching to windward of Granada for any other fleet. Nelson, however, with skill and

exertions never exceeded, and almost unexampled, bore for that island.

Advices met him on the way, that the combined fleets, having captured the Diamond Rock, were then at Martinique, and were expected to sail that night for the attack of Granada. Nelson arrived off that island, and there learned that they had passed to leeward of Antigua the preceding day, and taken a homeward-bound convoy. Had it not been for false information, upon which Nelson had acted reluctantly, and in opposition to his own judgment, he would have been off Port Royal just as they were leaving it, and the battle would have been fought on the spot where Rodney defeated De Grasse. That they were flying back to Europe he believed, and for Europe he steered in pursuit having disembarked the troops at Antigua, and taking with him the *Spartiate*, the only addition to the squadron with which he was pursuing so superior a force. Five days afterwards the *Amazon* brought intelligence that she had spoken a schooner which had seen them steering to the N.; and, by computation, eighty-seven leagues off. On the 17th of July he came in sight of Cape St. Vincent, and steered for Gibraltar. The next day he anchored at Gibraltar.

Here he communicated with his old friend Collingwood, who, having been detached with a squadron, when the disappearance of the combined fleets and of Nelson in their pursuit, was known in England, had taken his station off Cadiz. He thought that Ireland was the enemy's ultimate object. As yet, however, all was conjecture concerning the enemy; and Nelson, having victualled and watered at Tetuan, stood for Ceuta still without information of their course. Next day intelligence arrived that the French fleet had been seen standing to the northward. He proceeded off Cape

St. Vincent, rather cruising for intelligence than knowing whither to betake himself. Still persevering, and still disappointed, he returned near enough to Cadiz to ascertain that they were not there; traversed the Bay of Biscay; and then, as a last hope, stood over for the north-west coast of Ireland, against adverse winds, till, on the evening of the 12th of August, he learned that they had not been heard of there. Frustrated thus in all his hopes, after a pursuit to which, for its extent, rapidity, and perseverance, no parallel can be produced, he judged it best to reinforce the Channel fleet with his squadron, lest the enemy, as Collingwood apprehended, should bear down upon Brest with their whole collected force. On the 15th he joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant. No news had yet been obtained of the enemy; and on the same evening he received orders to proceed to Portsmouth.

CHAPTER IX

Sir Robert Calder falls in with the combined fleets—They form a junction with the Ferrol squadron, and get into Cadiz—Nelson is reappointed to the command—Battle of Trafalgar—Victory, and Death of Nelson.

At Portsmouth, Nelson at length found news of the combined fleet. Sir Robert Calder, who had been sent out to intercept their return, had fallen in with them on the 22nd of July, sixty leagues west of Cape Finisterre. Their force consisted of twenty sail of the line, three fifty gunships, five frigates, and two brigs; his, of fifteen line-of-battle ships, two frigates, a cutter, and a lugger.

Frustrated as his own hopes had been, Nelson had yet the high satisfaction of knowing that his judgment had never been more conspicuously approved, and that he had rendered essential service to his country by driving the enemy from those islands, where they expected there could be no force capable of opposing them. The West India merchants in London, as men whose interests were more immediately benefited, appointed a deputation to express their thanks for his great and judicious exertions. It was now his intention to rest awhile from his labours, and recruit himself, after all his fatigues and cares, in the society of those whom he loved. All his stores were brought up from the *Victory*; and he found in his house at Merton the enjoyment which he had anticipated. Many days had not elapsed before Captain Blackwood, on his way to London with dispatches, called on him at five in the morning. Nelson, who was already dressed, exclaimed, the moment he saw him: "I am sure you bring me news of the French and

Spanish fleets! I think I shall yet have to beat them!" They had refitted at Vigo, then proceeded to Ferrol, brought out the squadron from thence, and with it entered Cadiz in safety. "Depend on it, Blackwood," he repeatedly said, "I shall yet give M. Villeneuve a drubbing." But, when Blackwood had left him, he wanted resolution to declare his wishes to Lady Hamilton and his sisters, and endeavoured to drive away the thought. He had done enough, he said, "Let the man trudge it who has lost his budget." His countenance belied his lips; and as he was pacing one of the walks in the garden, which he used to call the quarter-deck, Lady Hamilton came up to him, and told him she saw he was uneasy. He smiled, and said: "No, he was as happy as possible; he was surrounded by his family, his health was better since he had been on shore, and he would not give sixpence to call the King his uncle." She replied, that she did not believe him—that she knew he was longing to get at the combined fleets—that he considered them as his own property—that he would be miserable if any man but himself did the business; and that he ought to have them, as the price and reward of his two years' long watching, and his hard chase. "Nelson," said she, "however we may lament your absence, offer your services; they will be accepted, and you will gain a quiet heart by it: you will have a glorious victory, and then you may return here, and be happy." He looked at her with tears in his eyes:—"Brave Emma! Good Emma! If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons."

His services were as willingly accepted as they were offered; and Lord Barham, giving him the list of the navy, desired him to choose his own officers. "Choose yourself, my lord," was his reply; "the same spirit

actuates the whole profession. You cannot choose wrong." Lord Barham then desired him to say what ships, and how many, he would wish in addition to the fleet which he was going to command, and said they should follow his as soon as each was ready. No appointment was ever more in unison with the feelings and judgment of the whole nation. They, like Lady Hamilton, thought that the destruction of the combined fleets ought properly to be Nelson's work; that he who had been

> "Half around the sea-girt ball,
> The hunter of the recreant Gaul,"

ought to reap the spoils of the chase which he had watched so long, and so perseveringly pursued.

Unremitting exertions were made to equip the ships which he had chosen, and especially to refit the *Victory*, which was once more to bear his flag.

Early on the following morning he reached Portsmouth; and having despatched his business on shore, endeavoured to elude the populace by taking a by-way to the beach; but a crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain a sight of his face. Many were in tears, and many knelt down before him, and blessed him as he passed. England has had many heroes; but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow-countrymen as Nelson. All men knew that his heart was as humane as it was fearless; that there was not in his nature the slightest alloy of selfishness or cupidity; but that with perfect and entire devotion he served his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, and therefore they loved him as truly and as fervently as he loved England. They pressed upon the parapet to gaze after him when his barge pushed off, and he was returning their cheers

by waving his hat. The sentinels, who endeavoured to prevent them from trespassing upon this ground, were wedged among the crowd; and an officer, who, not very prudently upon such an occasion, ordered them to drive the people down with their bayonets, was compelled speedily to retreat, for the people would not be debarred from gazing till the last moment upon the hero—the darling hero of England.

He arrived off Cadiz on the 29th of September, his birthday. Fearing that if the enemy knew his force they might be deterred from venturing to sea, he kept out of sight of land, desired Collingwood to fire no salute, and hoist no colours; and wrote to Gibraltar to request that the force of the fleet might not be inserted there in the Gazette. His reception in the Mediterranean fleet was as gratifying as the farewell of his countrymen at Portsmouth. The officers who came on board to welcome him forgot his rank as commander in their joy at seeing him again.

On the day of his arrival, Villeneuve received orders to put to sea the first opportunity. Villeneuve, however, hesitated when he heard that Nelson had resumed the command. He called a council of war; and their determination was, that it would not be expedient to leave Cadiz, unless they had reason to believe themselves stronger by one-third than the British force. In the public measures of this country secrecy is seldom practicable, and seldomer attempted. Here, however, by the precautions of Nelson, and the wise measures of the Admiralty, the enemy were for once kept in ignorance; for as the ships appointed to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet were despatched singly, each as soon as it was ready, their collected number was not stated in the newspapers, and their arrival was not known to the enemy.

But the enemy knew that Admiral Louis, with six sail, had been detached for stores and water to Gibraltar. Accident also contributed to make the French Admiral doubt whether Nelson himself had actually taken the command. An American, lately arrived from England, maintained that it was impossible; for he had seen him only a few days before in London, and at that time there was no rumour of his going again to sea.

The station which Nelson had chosen was some fifty or sixty miles to the west of Cadiz. At this distance he hoped to decoy the enemy out, while he guarded against the danger of being caught with a westerly wind near Cadiz, and driven within the Straits. The blockade of the port was rigorously enforced, in hopes that the combined fleet might be forced to sea by want. The Danish vessels, therefore, which were carrying provisions from the French ports in the bay, were seized. The supplies from France were thus effectually cut off. There was now every indication that the enemy would speedily venture out; officers and men were in the highest spirits at the prospect of giving them a decisive blow, such indeed as would put an end to all further contest upon the seas. Theatrical amusements were performed every evening in most of the ships, and "God save the King" was the hymn with which the sports concluded. "I verily believe," said Nelson (writing on the 6th of October), "that the country will soon be put to some expense for my account—either a monument, or a new pension and honours; for I have not the very smallest doubt but that a very few days, almost hours, will put us in battle. The success no man can insure; but the fighting them, if they are to be got at, I pledge myself. The sooner the better; I don't like to have these things upon my mind."

At this time he was not without some cause of anxiety; he was in want of frigates, the eyes of the fleet, as he always called them; to the want of which the enemy before were indebted for their escape, and Buonaparte for his arrival in Egypt. He had only twenty-three ships; and, though Nelson never doubted of victory, mere victory was not what he looked to, he wanted to annihilate the enemy's fleet. The Carthagena squadron might effect a junction with this fleet on the one side; and on the other it was to be expected that a similar attempt would be made by the French from Brest; in either case a formidable contingency to be apprehended by the blockading force.

On the 9th, Nelson sent Collingwood what he called, in his diary, the "Nelson touch." "I send you," said he, "my plan of attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in; but it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another, than I have in you; and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend Nelson and Bronte."

The order of sailing was to be the order of battle; the fleet in two lines, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-deckers. The second in command, having the entire direction of his line, was to break through the enemy, about the twelfth ship from their rear; he would lead through the centre, and the advanced squadron was to cut off three or four ahead of the centre. This plan was to be adapted to the strength of the enemy, so that they should always be

one-fourth superior to those whom they cut off. Nelson said, "That his Admirals and Captains, knowing his precise object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals, and act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen, or clearly understood, no Captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy." One of the last orders of this admirable man was, that the name and family of every officer, seaman, and marine, who might be killed or wounded in action, should be, as soon as possible, returned to him, in order to be transmitted to the chairman of the Patriotic Fund, that the case might be taken into consideration, for the benefit of the sufferer, or his family.

About half-past nine in the morning of the 19th, the *Mars* repeated the signal that the enemy were coming out of port. The wind was at this time very light, with partial breezes, mostly from the S.S.W. Nelson ordered the signal to be made for a chase in the south-east quarter. About two the repeating ships announced that the enemy were at sea. All night the British fleet continued under all sail, steering to the south-east; at daybreak they were in the entrance of the Straits, but the enemy were not in sight. About seven one of the frigates made signal that the enemy were bearing north. Upon this the *Victory* hove to, and shortly afterwards Nelson made sail again to the northward. In the afternoon the wind blew fresh from the south-west, and the English began to fear that the foe might be forced to return to port. A little before sunset, however, Blackwood telegraphed that they appeared determined to go to the westward. "And that," said the Admiral in his diary, "they shall not do, if it is in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them." Nelson had signified to Blackwood that he depended upon him to

keep sight of the enemy. They were observed so well that all their motions were made known to him; and, as they wore twice, he informed that they were aiming to keep the port of Cadiz open, and would retreat there as soon as they saw the British fleet. For this reason he was very careful not to approach near enough to be seen by them during the night. At daybreak the combined fleets were distinctly seen from the *Victory's* deck, formed in a close line of battle ahead. Our fleet consisted of twenty-seven sail of the line, and four frigates; theirs of thirty-three, and seven large frigates. Their superiority was greater in size and weight of metal than in numbers. They had four thousand troops on board; and the best riflemen who could be procured were dispersed through the ships.

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates. Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also; and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west, light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines, and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, led the lee line of thirteen ships; the *Victory* led the weather line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin, and wrote the following prayer:

"May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a

great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself individually, I commit my life to Him who made me; and may his blessing light on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen! Amen! Amen!"

Having thus discharged his devotional duties, he annexed, in the same diary, the following remarkable writing:

"*October 21, 1805.—Then in sight of the combined fleets of France and Spain, distant about ten miles.*

"Whereas the eminent services of Emma Hamilton, widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, have been of the very greatest service to our King and country, to my knowledge, without her receiving any reward from either our King or country.

"First, that she obtained the King of Spain's letter, in 1796, to his brother, the King of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare war against England; from which letter the Ministry sent out orders to the then Sir John Jervis to strike, a stroke, if opportunity offered, against either the arsenals of Spain or her fleets. That neither of these was done is not the fault of Lady Hamilton; the opportunity might have been offered.

"Secondly, the British fleet under my command could never have returned the second time to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton's influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleet being supplied with everything, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply; went to Egypt and destroyed the French fleet.

"Could I have rewarded these services, I would not now call upon my country; but as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma Lady Hamilton therefore a legacy to my King and country, that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life.

"I also leave to the beneficence of my country my adopted daughter, Horatia Nelson Thomson; and I desire she will use in future the name of Nelson only.

"These are the only favours I ask of my King and country, at this moment when I am going to fight their battle. May God bless my King and country, and all those who I hold dear! My relations it is needless to mention; they will of course be amply provided for.

NELSON and BRONTE.

"*Witness.* { HENRY BLACKWOOD
T. M. HARDY."

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen. He knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fired upon the enemy. They formed their line in such a way as to bring the shoals of Trafalgar and St. Pedro under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done; and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve was a skilful seaman. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line, every alternate ship being about a cable's length to



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windward of her second ahead and astern. Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered, that considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied, "I shall not be satisfied with anything short of twenty." Soon afterwards he asked him if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Captain Blackwood made answer, that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made, which will be remembered as long as the language, or even the memory of England shall endure—Nelson's last signal—"ENGLAND EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY!" It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed, and the feeling which it expressed. "Now," said Lord Nelson, "I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty."

He wore that day, as usual, his Admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of the different orders with which he was invested. Ornaments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy, were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships; and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other, and the Surgeon, Mr. Beatty, spoke to the Chaplain, Dr. Scott, and to Mr. Scott, the public

Secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress, or cover the stars: but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. "In honour I gained them," he had said, when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, "and in honour I will die with them." Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred by any fear of exciting his displeasure, from speaking to him himself upon a subject in which the weal of England, as well as the life of Nelson, was concerned, but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity. This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to remonstrate or reason with him; but both Blackwood, and his own Captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible; and he consented at last to let the *Leviathan* and the *Téméraire*, which were sailing abreast of the *Victory*, be ordered to pass ahead. Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind was indulged; for these ships could not pass ahead if the *Victory* continued to carry all her sail, and so far was Nelson from shortening sail, that it was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the Bay of Cadiz. Our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy, and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable; but the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle; and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other what a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead!

The French Admiral, from the *Bucentaure*, beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing—Nelson and Collingwood each leading his line; and pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed, that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness. Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the *Victory*, and across her bows, fired single guns at her, to ascertain whether she was yet within their range. As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him, he desired Blackwood, ond Captain Prowse, of the *Sirius*, to repair to their respective frigates, and on their way to tell all the Captains of the line-of-battle ships that he depended on their exertions; and that if by the prescribed mode of attack they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front of the poop, Blackwood took him by the hand, saying he hoped soon to return and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, "God bless you, Blackwood ; I shall never speak to you again."

Nelson's column was steered about two points more to the north than Collingwood's, in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz; the lee line, therefore, was first engaged. "See," cried Nelson, pointing to the *Royal Sovereign* as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line. "See how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action!" Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and old friend, turned

to his Captain, and exclaimed, "Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!" Both these brave officers perhaps at this moment thought of Nelson with gratitude, for a circumstance which had occurred on the preceding day. Admiral Collingwood, with some of the Captains, having gone on board the *Victory* to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him where his Captain was, and was told in reply that they were not upon good terms with each other. "Terms!" said Nelson; "good terms with each other!" Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham; led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying, "Look! yonder are the enemy," bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory*, till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-topgallant sail; then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason the *Santissima Trinidad*, Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks, and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered. Meantime an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The Admiral's Secretary was one of the first who fell; he was killed by a cannon-shot while conversing with Hardy. Capt. Adair, of the Marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr. Scott; but he anxiously asked, "Is that poor Scott that's gone?" and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, "Poor fellow!" Presently a double-headed

shot struck a party of marines who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them, upon which Nelson immediately desired Capt. Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the quarter-deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle, and bruising his foot. Both stopped, and looked anxiously at each other; each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said, "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long."

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun. Fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding sails and her booms, shot away. Nelson declared that in all his battles he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships. Hardy informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied, "Take your choice, Hardy; it does not signify much." The Master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the *Victory* ran on board the *Redoutable*, just as her tiller ropes were shot away. The French ship received her with a broadside; then instantly let down her lower-deck ports, for fear of being boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry in his tops. He had a strong dislike to the practice, not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals

may suffer, and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoubtable,* supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizen-top, which in the then situation of the two vessels was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor Secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. "They have done for me at last, Hardy," said he. "I hope not," cried Hardy. "Yes," he replied; "my backbone is shot through." Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately; then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England perhaps would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men, over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the Midship-

men's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Captain Hardy, the Chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back and the gush of blood he felt momently within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the Surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; "for," said he, "you can do nothing for me." All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurrahed, and at every hurrah a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Capt. Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried, "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!" An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence, Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?" "Very well," replied Hardy; "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing." "I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck." Hardy answered, "There was no fear of that." Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke

of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he; "I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "Oh, no!" he replied; "it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Capt. Hardy then once more shook hands with him, and, with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the Surgeon ascertain this, said to him: "You know I am gone, I know it. I feel something rising in my breast"—putting his hands on his left side—"which tells me so." And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great, he replied, "So great, that he wished he was dead. Yet," said he, in a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer too!" And after a few minutes, in the same undertone, he added, "What would become of poor Lady Hamilton, if she knew my situation!" Next to his country she occupied his thoughts. Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned; and, again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly; but fourteen or fifteen at least. "That's well," cried Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty." And then, in a stronger voice, he said: "Anchor, Hardy; anchor." Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, Hardy," said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise him-

self from the bed: "Do you anchor." His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him in a low voice, "Don't throw me overboard": and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the King to order otherwise. Then reverting to private feelings: "Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy: take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy," said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek: and Nelson said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty." Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again and kissed his forehead. "Who is that?" said Nelson; and being informed, he replied, "God bless you, Hardy." And Hardy then left him—for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, "I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone." Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the Chaplain, "Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner": and after a short pause, "Remember that I have Lady Hamilton, and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country." His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say, "Thank God, I have done my duty." These words he repeatedly pronounced; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

Within a quarter of an hour after Nelson was wounded, about fifty of the *Victory's* men fell by the enemy's musketry. They, however, on their part, were not idle; and it was not long before there were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen-top of the

Redoutable. One of them was the man who had given the fatal wound: he did not live to boast of what he had done. An old quartermaster had seen him fire; and easily recognised him, because he wore a glazed cocked hat and a white frock. This quartermaster and two Midshipmen, Mr. Collingwood and Mr. Pollard, were the only persons left in the *Victory's* poop—the two Midshipmen kept firing at the top, and he supplied them with cartridges. One of the Frenchmen, attempting to make his escape down the rigging, was shot by Mr. Pollard, and fell on the poop. But the old quartermaster, as he cried out, "That's he—that's he," and pointed at the other, who was coming forward to fire again, received a shot in his mouth, and fell dead. Both the Midshipmen then fired at the same time, and the fellow dropped in the top. When they took possession of the prize, they went into the mizen-top, and found him dead, with one ball through his head, and another through his breast.

The *Redoutable* struck within twenty minutes after the fatal shot had been fired from her. During that time she had been twice on fire—in her fore-chains and in her forecastle. The French, as they had done in other battles, made use in this of fireballs and other combustibles; implements of destruction which other nations, from a sense of honour and humanity, have laid aside; which add to the sufferings of the wounded, without determining the issue of the combat: which none but the cruel would employ, and which never can be successful against the brave. Once they succeeded in setting fire from the *Redoutable*, to some ropes and canvas on the *Victory's* booms. The cry ran through the ship, and reached the cockpit: but even this dreadful cry produced no confusion: the men displayed that

perfect self-possession in danger by which English seamen are characterized; they extinguished the flames on board their own ship, and then hastened to extinguish them in the enemy, by throwing buckets of water from the gangway. When the *Redoutable* had struck, it was not practicable to board her from the *Victory;* for, though the two ships touched, the upper works of both fell in so much, that there was a great space between their gangways; and she could not be boarded from the lower or middle decks, because her ports were down. Some of our men went to Lieutenant Quilliam, and offered to swim under her bows, and get up there; but it was thought unfit to hazard brave lives in this manner.

What our men would have done from gallantry, some of the crew of the *Santissima Trinidad* did to save themselves. Unable to stand the tremendous fire of the *Victory*, whose larboard guns played against this great four-decker, and not knowing how else to escape them, nor where else to betake themselves for protection, many of them leaped overboard, and swam to the *Victory*: and were actually helped up her sides by the English during the action. The Spaniards began the battle with less vivacity than their unworthy allies, but they continued it with greater firmness. The *Argonauta* and *Bahama* were defended till they had each lost about four hundred men; the *San Juan Nepomuceno* lost three hundred and fifty. Often as the superiority of British courage has been proved against France upon the seas, it was never more conspicuous than in this decisive conflict. Five of our ships were engaged muzzle to muzzle with five of the French. In all five the Frenchmen lowered their lower-deck ports, and deserted their guns; while our men continued deliberately to load and fire, till they had made the victory secure.

Once, amidst his sufferings, Nelson had expressed a wish that he were dead; but immediately the spirit subdued the pains of death, and he wished to live a little longer—doubtless that he might hear the completion of the victory which he had seen so gloriously begun. That consolation, that joy, that triumph was afforded him. He lived to know that the victory was decisive; and the last guns which were fired at the flying enemy were heard a minute or two before he expired. The ships which were thus flying were four of the enemy's van, all French, under Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. They had borne no part in the action; and now, when they were seeking safety in flight, they fired not only into the *Victory* and *Royal Sovereign* as they passed, but poured their broadsides into the Spanish captured ships; and they were seen to back their topsails, for the purpose of firing with more precision. The indignation of the Spaniards at this detestable cruelty from their allies, for whom they had fought so bravely, and so profusely bled, may well be conceived. It was such that when, two days after the action, seven of the ships which had escaped into Cadiz came out, in hopes of retaking some of the disabled prizes, the prisoners in the *Argonauta*, in a body, offered their services to the British prize-master, to man the guns against any of the French ships, saying that if a Spanish ship came alongside, they would quietly go below; but they requested that they might be allowed to fight the French, in resentment for the murderous usage which they had suffered at their hands. Such was their earnestness, and such the implicit confidence which could be placed in Spanish honour, that the offer was accepted, and they were actually stationed at the lower-deck guns. Dumanoir and his squadron were not more fortunate than the fleet from whose destruction they fled. They

fell in with Sir Richard Strachan, who was cruising for the Rochefort squadron, and were all taken. In the better days of France, if such a crime could then have been committed, it would have received an exemplary punishment from the French Government; under Buonaparte it was sure of impunity, and perhaps might be thought deserving of reward. But if the Spanish Court had been independent, it would have become us to have delivered Dumanoir and his Captains up to Spain, that they might have been brought to trial, and hanged in sight of the remains of the Spanish fleet.

The total British loss in the battle of Trafalgar amounted to one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven. Twenty of the enemy struck. But it was not possible to anchor the fleet, as Nelson had enjoined; a gale came on from the south-west. Some of the prizes went down, some went on shore; one effected its escape into Cadiz; others were destroyed. Four only were saved, and those by the greatest exertions. The wounded Spaniards were sent ashore, an assurance being given that they should not serve till regularly exchanged; and the Spaniards, with a generous feeling which would not perhaps have been found in any other people, offered the use of their hospitals for our wounded, pledging the honour of Spain that they should be carefully attended there. When the storm, after the action, drove some of the prizes upon the coast, they declared that the English who were thus thrown into their hands should not be considered as prisoners of war; and the Spanish soldiers gave up their own beds to their shipwrecked enemies. The Spanish Vice-Admiral, Alva, died of his wounds. Villeneuve was sent to England, and permitted to return to France. The French Government say that he destroyed himself on the way to Paris, dreading the consequences of a

court-martial; but there is every reason to believe that the tyrant, who never acknowledged the loss of the battle of Trafalgar, added Villeneuve to the numerous victims of his murderous policy.

It is almost superfluous to add, that all the honours which a grateful country could bestow were heaped upon the memory of Nelson. His brother was made an earl, with a grant of £6,000 a year; £10,000 were voted to each of his sisters; and £100,000 for the purchase of an estate. A public funeral was decreed, and a public monument; statues and monuments also were voted by most of our principal cities. The leaden coffin in which he was brought home was cut in pieces, which were distributed as relics of Saint Nelson—so the gunner of the *Victory* called them; and when, at his interment, his flag was about to be lowered into the grave, the sailors who assisted at the ceremony with one accord rent it in pieces, that each might preserve a fragment while he lived.

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity. Men started at the intelligence, and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and reverenced him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own, and of all former times—was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly indeed had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end. The fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed. New navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of



Death. of Nelson

their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him. The general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards, were all which they could now bestow upon him, whom the King, the legislature, and the nation, would have alike delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have weakened the church bells, have given schoolboys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and "old men from the chimney corner," to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated indeed with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas. And the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that, in the course of nature, he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honours, and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful that of the martyred patriot; the most

splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory: and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example, which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England: a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength. Thus it is that the spirits of the great and the wise continue to live and to act after them; verifying, in this sense, the language of the old mythologist!

> "Aerial spirits by great Jove designed
> To be on earth the guardians of mankind;
> Invisible to mortal eyes they go,
> And mark our actions, good or bad, below."

END